RARE MASTERPIECES
OF PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

MACHIAVELLISM

BY
FRIEDRICH MEINECKE

TRANSLATED BY DOUGLAS SCOTT
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
W. STARK

One of the ever present preoccupations of human thought, both theoretical and practical, is the relation between the needs of state on the one hand and the demands of morality on the other. Should the statesman act according to the maxim "my country—right or wrong", or should he act according to the principle "let justice be done, even if the heavens fall"?

Friedrich Meinecke, who was for many years the acknowledged leader of historical scholarship on the European continent, follows the fascinating discussions of this perennial theme from Machiavelli, by whom it was first clearly formulated, down to the end of the nineteenth century, encountering on the way such men as Richelieu and Frederic the Great, both as great practitioners of the art of statecraft as they were theoreticians of it, and many other figures great and small. His is a book which has all the virtues of scholarship, but it is at the same time more than merely an academic masterpiece. For Meinecke was as much interested in politics as in the past and the whole problem had for him the complexion of a deep and inescapable personal dilemma. The work is thus both a prime piece of historical research and a moving record of a man's struggle with himself in the pursuit of rectitude and clarity.

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OF PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE
EDITED BY DR. W. STARK

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MACHIAVELLISM

FRIEDRICH MEINECKE

MACHIAVELLISM

THE DOCTRINE OF RAISON D'ETAT AND ITS PLACE IN MODERN HISTORY

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN
BY DOUGLAS SCOTT

WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
TO FRIEDRICH MEINECKE'S WORK
BY DR. W. STARK

ROUTLEDGE AND KEGAN PAUL
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TO THE MEMORY OF

ERNST TROELTSCH

EDITOR'S PREFACE

WHEN Friedrich Meinecke died in February 1954, the great English dailies such as *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* reported his death and paid tribute to his memory. This alone is a measure of his reputation, for few foreign scholars are ever honoured in this way by the British press. But Meinecke was probably better known as a brave man than as a great scholar, and only a small pamphlet—*Die Deutsche Katastrophe*—has so far been translated into English. The present book makes for the first time one of his major works available to a broader public in the Anglo-Saxon world. It is of all his writings the one with the widest human significance: its subject is the contest, ever present in history, between the power-drive inherent in man's lower nature and the demands of ethical conduct never absent from the higher reaches of the human mind.

A word must be said in justification of the name which has been given to this English version of the work. *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* would have beautifully translated into Shakespearean English: 'The Doctrine of Statism in Modern History'. Unfortunately the operative word in this phrase, the word statism, has disappeared from our vocabulary and we have no modern equivalent for *Staatsräson* or *raison d'état*. In this quandary, Meinecke's book itself yielded a useful hint. He says in the second chapter that it is 'the struggle for and against Machiavellism' which he is going to describe. This passage has suggested the main title; and the original German title has been added as a sub-title. This seems as satisfactory a solution as can be imagined in the circumstances.

I have to thank Donald Pennington and Peter Campbell for reading my Introduction before it went to the press.

W. STARK

Manchester
March 1956

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

FRIEDRICH MEINECKE'S was a long life. When he was born, in 1862, his German fatherland had not yet found its long-sought unity in a common *Reich*; indeed, the fateful battles of Sadowa and Sedan, which were to determine the extent and the political character of that *Reich*, had not yet been fought. When he died ninety-two years later in 1954, the *Reich* had run through a whole cycle of existence. It had lived through a brief morning glory under Bismarck; it had experienced a sultry noon-tide under the Kaiser; it had emerged from the ordeal of war and revolution into the declining day of the Weimar Republic when the shadows were constantly lengthening, to fall ultimately into the twilight of despotism and to be dismembered and extinguished in the crushing defeat of 1945. Meinecke saw all these developments and they affected him deeply—not only because he was a good German, but even more because he was a good historian. This may sound paradoxical, but it is essentially the sober truth. To be a historian did not mean for Meinecke to live in the past, or to have one's mind turned towards the past: it meant first and foremost to take one's place squarely in the life of one's own period, to feel its driftwinds and to stand its storms. Deeply influenced by the intellectual movement called, in an untranslatable term, *Lebensphilosophie*, and standing close to such thinkers as Wilhelm Dilthey, Meinecke regarded the study of history less as an exercise of the human intellect than as an experience of the whole personality—as an understanding participation in the struggles, hopes, fears, frustrations and achievements of the men of other days. The historian can, in his conviction, enter the realm of the past only by the gateway of the present: only a wholehearted entry into the reality of the present can give his mind that heightened awareness of what really matters which he will need when he tries to come to grips with the reality of the past. Anyone acting otherwise, anyone going to the sources with the mental habits of the bookworm, will fail to establish true contact with the living forces of the ages, will miss what is and was most essential —indeed, will be a dead man handling dead things. An attitude such as this lays on the scholar a heavy burden, a cross few have cared to assume. It takes him out of the quiet class-room and the sheltered library

to the edge at any rate of the arena of political action. Meinecke stood there all his life, from the participation in a censure motion against Wilhelm II in 1908 to deep sympathy with the plotters against Hitler in 1944.[1] Much of what is great in his work stems from this nearness to history itself, history as it is actually happening.

There have been ages when this whole approach to the historian's task was widespread and sympathetically received, and there have been other ages when it was exceptional and generally condemned. In Friedrich Meinecke's younger years it was very nearly taboo. At the end of the nineteenth century German historians, like other scholars, stood under the influence of two great tendencies, the one springing from the revived Kantianism of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, the other coming from the still more powerful positivism of the West which had incarnated itself in Germany in such influential figures as Karl Lamprecht. Different as these philosophies were and as idealism and materialism always must be, they yet agreed in endeavouring to force upon the student of history a definite subject-and-object relationship to his material. Meinecke would have none of this. For him the main task of the historian was precisely to *close* the gap between the beholder and the life beheld, in other words, to overcome the subject-and-object relationship which the others regarded as alone 'scientific'. He did not think that the historian could be or should be as 'objective' in his attitude to his field as the astronomer or the botanist. He saw quite clearly that the historian who, by an effort of self-denial, indeed, of mortification, strives not to take an 'interest' in the things he studies, is bound to become an antiquarian, a gatherer of dead facts, the rag-and-bone man of history as it were. 'A historiography which is free of valuations', he wrote frankly, 'is either no more than a collection of materials and a preparation for historiography proper, or, if it sets up to be a genuine historiography, it makes an impression of insipidity.' [2] In a preface to the first work that made him famous, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, he expressed himself as follows: 'My book rests on the opinion that German historical research must, without giving up the valuable tradition of its methodological technique, rise again to freer activity and contact with the great powers of political and cultural life; that it may, without taking damage in its inmost nature and purpose, enter more boldly into philosophy as well as politics.' [3] This was a declaration of war on all those—and they were many—who regarded history merely as an exact record of what has been, as a register of

[1] *Strassburg, Freiburg, Berlin*, 1949, p. 124 *seq.*; *Die Deutsche Katastrophe*, 1946, p. 145 *seq.*

[2] *Kausalitäten und Werte in der Geschichte*, Historische Zeitschrift, vol. 137, 1928, p. 8; reprinted in *Schaffender Spiegel*, 1948; cf. p. 230.

[3] Ed. 1922, p. vi.

events. It was never that to Friedrich Meinecke. It was much rather to him a deeply human concern in which we cannot help becoming both intellectually and emotionally involved. This again helps to explain the great success which he has had. His books were never insipid. He shows us life with all its excruciating difficulties; history never appears with him as a smooth and placid flow but always as a movement from uncertainty to uncertainty, from problem to problem, from crisis to crisis. The distinctive style of his historiography is perhaps most apparent in some of his minor writings, for instance in his *Geschichte des deutsch-englischen Bündnisproblems* (1890–1901).[1] The tale of the negotiations between the two powers is here seen less from the point of view of the detached and omniscient outsider, the usual standpoint of the historian, than from the point of view of the diplomats acting on the German side, so that the reader can almost enter into the tensions between the struggling wills, and participate in the conflict which was being acted out around the conference tables of Berlin and London.

All this does not mean of course that Meinecke did not know the difference between historical scholarship and political pamphleteering. He, too, had his ideal of objectivity and integrity, but it was different from that of positivism which was, as he saw it, only a mechanical replica of an attitude at home exclusively in the natural sciences. To be objective meant to Meinecke, not to have no opinion, which is impossible for a man of flesh and blood, even if it is possible for the man who has made himself into a kind of animated recording tape, but to overcome his one-sidedness, to discipline his emotions, to become fair even to the adversary. Meinecke very largely succeeded in this endeavour, though perhaps not to the full, and this is a third explanation of his appeal. Always outspoken, he is never blind. He never pillories, he never preaches; and yet he avoids the impression that all human actions are somehow equally justified.

Meinecke has succeeded in catching the essence of this his scholarly ideal in a brief formula. The historian, he says, should be *ein schaffender Spiegel* [2]—an active or creative mirror. Positivism as well as Kantianism had demanded of him that he be a dead looking-glass, a passive mirror which would reflect the images it receives without distortion. But only physical events can be recorded in this way; human strivings cannot. Human strivings will yield up their secret only to the sympathetic eye, to an eye that can understand as well as see. It was Meinecke's ambition to make his historical writing, and all historical writing, into a re-creation as it were of the history created in the past; a mere telling of it would not satisfy him. He knew as well as anyone that such an endeavour can never wholly succeed; but he was convinced that the value of history as a human study depended on the degree to which

[1] Munich, 1927.

[2] Title of a collection of essays published in 1948.

it was successful. If he edged near the cauldron of politics, and got his wings singed in the process—for while Hitler was in power, Meinecke was in disgrace—he did so, not because he was interested in the game for its own sake, but only because he believed that participation in the affairs of the day would enable him better to give life to his discussion of the affairs of yesterday, to vitalize his writing of history. He was first and foremost, indeed, exclusively, a historian; but he was a historian with a difference in that he strove for an imaginative 'co-operation of historical searching and contemporary experience'.[1]

It was unavoidable that a scholarship so indissolubly wedded to contemporary developments should, in its contents and above all in its moods, be deeply coloured by all the vicissitudes of current affairs, especially as the four-score years and twelve of Meinecke's life were so full of cruel and world-shaking events. Like a fine seismograph, his mind registered all shocks, big and small, but two major cataclysms left especially deep marks in his writing, namely the years 1918 and 1933. Up to 1918, the world seemed to Meinecke to bear a smiling face: his early work is carried by a buoyant optimism, by enthusiasm and elation. In the last analysis this happy feeling was due to the experience of the *Reichsgründung* in 1871 which affected a whole generation of Germans like heady wine. Could anything be wrong with a world which produced such splendid results as Bismarck's empire? *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, first published in 1907, bears the imprint of a philosophy of harmony and contentment. The dejection brought on by the catastrophe of 1918 was bound to be as deep as the exaltation before 1918 had been high. Like so many other Germans of the period, say, Max Weber, Meinecke went through a spiritual crisis from which he emerged with a changed outlook. Life no longer seemed a giver of gifts to him, but rather a battlefield of hostile forces. His philosophy of the 'twenties was divided, antithetic. One could almost describe it as manichaean. Still anxious to preserve his basically optimistic disposition, Meinecke was forced increasingly to acknowledge the presence of dark and demoniac forces in history. Might and right are no longer seen in ultimate harmony, as they were in 1907, but rather as locked in protracted and deadly strife—strife without issue, without decision, without either victory or defeat. *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte*, the great work of this decade, is an unhappy book. But Meinecke had not yet touched the depths. The year 1933 worked a new change for the worse. It is not too much to say that it brought acute suffering to Meinecke. He thought of himself as a disciple of the humanists, Humboldt, Herder and Goethe; he found himself thrust into the age of the sadists, Hitler, Himmler and Goebbels; things cannot have been easy for him. His writings become in a sense a search for what

[1] *Die Idee der Staatsräson*, ed. 1925, p. 530. Cf. below, p. 424.

he himself called *Geschichtstrost*—'the historian's consolation'. Would the study of the past not in the end yield some indication, however problematic, that might is not for ever the master and murderer of right, that the forces of light are not for ever condemned to be defeated in their contest against the powers of darkness? There is a tragic undertone to the work of the 'thirties. Nevertheless, it seems that it is compensated to some extent by a certain calm that has taken possession of Meinecke's mind. It was advancing age that brought coolness and resignation, but the quieter mood was also strengthened by the study of the great classics, and especially of Goethe, to whose commanding figure our author's last great publication of 1936, *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, is leading up. With much difficulty, Meinecke tried to make his way towards a semi-religious view of reality. The collapse of the Third Reich allowed him to emerge from his enforced retirement and restored to the octogenarian the influence he had wielded as a younger man. Naturally, he was unable to present to the world a complete account of the new view of history which the pressure of events had forced upon him. But such books as *Die Deutsche Katastrophe* of 1946 and such lectures as *Ranke und Burckhardt* of 1947 show us how deep a revision of traditional historical thinking he felt necessary, and how fearlessly he faced its disquieting challenges and problems.

I

What will ensure the name of Friedrich Meinecke an important place, not only in the history of historical scholarship, but also in the wider history of ideas, is the fact that we can watch in his intellectual development the break-up of a philosophical tradition which had dominated Germany for more than a hundred years. He himself liked to describe it as classical liberalism; Wilhelm Dilthey coined the more expressive and felicitous term objective idealism and recognized in it, along with materialism and the 'idealism of freedom', one of the three basic and recurrent philosophical attitudes. For objective idealism, the world is not void of meaning, as it is for materialism, nor yet does it receive its meaning from outside, from a transcendental deity which breaks it into shape, as the idealism of freedom maintains, but it carries its meaning in itself, it is suffused by a world soul which incarnates and objectifies itself in it and gives value to its every fragment and particle. The universe is conceived on the analogy of the human body and the human mind. It is first of all a great totality, an organism even, in which each limb has its proper place and function; but it is more than just an organism, and that distinguishes this theory from the superficially similar organicism of some materialists: it is alive throughout, inspirited by a spiritual principle which, whether it is self-conscious or not, guarantees its

harmony. The accent is here entirely on optimism: the world is, basically at any rate, as it ought to be. If discrepancies arise within it, they are either more apparent than real, and can thus be argued away, or they appear as necessary stages on the road to an even higher concord and are thus, in the fullness of time, overcome by life itself. Never is the objective spirit really divided against itself, just as we ourselves are never really at war with ourselves. The words pantheism or panentheism can perhaps serve as convenient labels for this whole happy attitude.

When Meinecke fell for this smiling philosophy, it had already a long development behind it, a development which was very largely, if not exclusively, German. The first who made a decisive bid to gain his country for it was Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in the early eighteenth century. His key-concept of pre-established harmony, though it still owes something to the older theistic idealism of freedom, in so far as the co-ordination of all elements of nature is originally due to the fiat of an all-powerful Creator-God, is yet already characteristically objective in its idealism because it regards the law of constant harmonization as currently operative in the world itself, and not as constantly breaking into it from above and beyond. By the great romantical philosophers, Schleiermacher, Schelling and Hegel, the remnants of personalistic theism were then successfully removed, and there remained in the end the consistent system of ideas called *Identitätsphilosophie* because it asserts that in the last analysis and on the metaphysical level all phenomena, however antithetic they may appear in ordinary life—mind and matter, content and form, god and world, I and you, Is and Ought —are reconciled and indeed identical, a grand, unbroken, ideal Unity. Meinecke received this complex of ideas less from the philosophers than from the poets, and above all from Goethe who gave it the artistic expression for which, by its very nature, it seemed to call. He was much less influenced in his outlook by the surviving idealism of freedom which asserted itself in the writings of Kant, Schiller and Fichte. They appeared to him in a manner remote from reality, whereas the objective idealists seemed to him to have fathomed the essence of reality itself.

But what won the young Meinecke, mind, heart and soul, for the Leibnizian tradition in philosophy was not only its presence in the poetical works of Goethe, but also, and even more, its dominating position in the historical works of Leopold von Ranke as whose devoted disciple and would-be continuator Meinecke regarded himself all his life. It was not a pretty story Ranke had to tell in his many volumes of French, English, German and Papal history: conspiracy and poison, carnage and brutality, rack and rope and dagger and the gallows played too prominent a part in it. Yet Ranke, though he can be indignant at the wickedness he encounters, and though he never condones it, is not really

appalled by it. It has been said of him that he lacked sensitivity, that his heart was too cold to react with vigour to the evils with which the path of mankind through modern times is strewn. Perhaps so; but the real reason why he showed so much equanimity and placidity in the face of all the cruelties of history lay not in his character but in his philosophy. He was convinced that if we only step back far enough and give ourselves sufficient distance to the picture, we shall see that even the darkest colours have their legitimate place in it, and that they only help to brighten the lighter hues. 'Over everything', he wrote to his son in 1873, 'there lies the divine ordination of things which we cannot indeed directly prove, but which we can sense. . . . Belief in providence is the sum and substance of all belief; in it I cannot be shaken.' And, more soberly, in the introduction to the third volume of his *Weltgeschichte* (1881): 'One could see the ideal kernel of the history of the human race in general in this: that in the struggles which take place between the contrary interests of the states and nations, ever higher potencies come to the surface. . . .' Clearly, history appeared to him *gottdurchhaucht*, permeated by the divine spirit as by a life-giving, upward-wafting breath.

This general panentheism also appears in Ranke's more specific theory of political life, as set out, for instance, in his *Politisches Gespräch* of 1836, and by it Meinecke was even more deeply influenced than by the master's more strictly historical works. The state is for Ranke an emanation of the mysterious primal life out of which all tangible phenomena in the universe emerge, an individuation and concretization of the universal. It belongs to the sphere which he calls *das Real-Geistige*, or real-ideal, the sphere that is in which we see the ideal realized, clothed into tangible form, become body. The state is thus interpreted as a precipitate of the spirit. In his essay *Geschichte und Philosophie*, Ranke expressed the opinion 'that in power there appears a spiritual being', and, given all the antecedents, this is no more than a logical and natural conclusion from the fundamental panentheistic starting point. Indeed, the state, and particularly the modern power-political state, had to have a very special attraction for Ranke and his disciple Meinecke: was it not just like the objective spirit itself in that it pressed forward, with elemental might, towards ever greater self-assertion, towards ever fuller self-realization? As can be seen, there was laid on, in the basic philosophy of the Ranke school, a deification of the power state which may have been innocent in its source, but which was bound to become dangerous in its effects. To call the state, like an individual soul, a 'divine idea', as Ranke did, or to speak of its 'greatness and moral dignity' as Meinecke was to do later on,[1] is harmless in the class-room or on the printed page, but how far is it from such conceptions to the orator's platform or, indeed, the battlefield? If, for instance,

[1] *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, ed. 1922, p. 279.

a country raises the cry for more *Lebensraum* or living space, is it not always justified in such a demand according to this philosophy? Is this cry not certain to be interpreted as the expression of a vital need, justified by the fact that the vitality of the state concerned is part and parcel of the wider vitality which is identical with the godhead? We are touching here upon one of the deeper explanations of how and why the nation of poets and philosophers could become a nation of square-bashers and swashbucklers. The transition was fatally easy, and the historians helped to accomplish it. Behind the radiant Ranke there looms up in the background the sinister Bismarck, not to speak of other even more sinister personages, the man of blood and iron, who forged his empire in the furnace of war. It is true that Ranke regarded the ties which bind nations together as stronger than the causes which divide them, and that he hoped that their very diversification and individual development would in the end lead to 'genuine harmony'.[1] But, on the other hand, he was not prepared to lay restrictions on the sovereign states or to reduce their autonomy in any way. Each country must follow out its own inherent life principle, and if in the process it gets into conflict with other countries, ordeal by battle is unavoidable.

The optimism at the root of their world-view made it impossible for Ranke and the Rankeans to regard even war as a pure and unadulterated evil. War, as experience proves, belongs to the normal routine of history; as all history is divinely inspired, not in detail perhaps, but in its over-all direction, even war must, in strict consistency, be presumed to be in some sense of the word good. Guided by a train of thought such as this, the members of the school as well as its master came in the end to regard war as a contest of moral energies in which the contestants never really break asunder as they must, even at the height of their hostility, remain *überwölbt* or 'domed in' by the wider cultural and spiritual community to which they both belong—a contest moreover from which both parties emerge with their personality more clearly defined and their vital tone powerfully heightened. Referring to Ranke's essay of 1833, *Die Grossen Mächte*, Meinecke writes this: 'Who does not know those mighty figures [the modern states] which Ranke's sketch makes pass . . . before our eyes, how they now gather strength and now clash with each other, and, by their violent struggle, grow in marrow and muscle?' [2] There is claimed, in this passage, a positive value for war, as if it were some divinely ordained process, belonging to the spiritual and moral order of things rather than to the sphere of mean interests and wicked ambitions, as if it were in point of fact more than merely the mass destruction of innocent beings who hardly know what it is all about. How far is this ideology from Kant's opinion that there has never been a good war or a bad peace! Meinecke was later to regret

[1] *Die Grossen Mächte*, end. [2] *Weltbürgertum*, 302 *seq.*

and to renounce these sombre implications of Ranke's panentheism, but before 1918 it held him completely in thrall.

If somebody had told Meinecke in 1906 or 1907 that he was not seeing the past as, according to Ranke, he should, 'the way it really happened', but was merely trying to implement a specious theory, he would have been indignantly surprised. And yet, how everything seems to him steeped in a rosy radiance! A small point of detail will serve better to prove this than any general thesis. Our example is taken from the book *Das Zeitalter der deutschen Erhebung, 1795–1815*, published in 1906.[1] In the eighteenth century war had lost some of its glamour. With the rise of the professional armies it had become, to some extent, a job done for a consideration, a hireling's business. After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, it regained its romantic splendour. Wars became again national wars, death in war the highest of sacrifices. No longer was it possible for an enemy alien to be assured, as Arthur Young was in France, that he was welcome in spite of the war, that the quarrels of kings were no concern of the peaceloving peoples. Few unprejudiced observers will call this development anything but regrettable or tragic. Meinecke, obsessed by Rankean and Leibnizian optimism, sees it as progress. The armies of the eighteenth century, he says, were clockwork mechanisms rather than bodies of men. The grenadiers of the great Fritz, for instance, behaved on parade like lifeless puppets, and not like living people. After the reforms of Gneisenau, Scharnhorst and Boyen, when the popular army replaced the old-style soldiery, all this changed for the better. The citizen, when he donned uniform, remained what he had been before: a personality, a moral agent. Thus an army was no longer a body without a soul, it had become more like the nation, a spiritual entity, a true society with a human side to it. Perhaps this interpretation of what happened is not altogether wrong; but how it misses the main point over a secondary aspect, just because that secondary aspect fits better into the preconceived philosophy of all's well with the world!

Purblind as he was in those years, Meinecke did not even discover some of the most fundamental problems with which any philosophical analysis of history must be expected to deal. One of them is the relation of individual willing and personal responsibility in political action to the supra-individual forces which hem it in and force it off its chosen paths—those forces which are variously described as conditions, circumstances, objective tendencies, collective trends, and so on and so forth. Some much less speculative historians of the day gave an answer to this question: Treitschke, for instance, and Sybel believed that history is made by men and that men, if they are only big enough, will always succeed in bending reality to their imperious wills; Lamprecht, on the

[1] Cf. pp. 108 *seq.*

other hand, assumed the primacy of the collective mind over the individual and saw the individual, at any rate the natural and normal individual, as an expression of, and carrier of, supra-individual mentalities. Meinecke, though he was nearer to Treitschke's point of view than to Lamprecht's, did not really think it necessary to choose between the two opinions because he saw objective tendencies and subjective desires and decisions held together and happily reconciled by a pre-established harmony. 'At the time of Frederick the Great', he wrote in his *Leben des Generalfeldmarschalls Hermann v. Boyen*,[1] 'the individuality of the ruler and the intellectual disposition of the age combined to produce the successes of the old system.' And, in the same work, he raises this casual observation to the level of a general principle. 'This indeed is the great secret of historical study, that one and the same idea appears at the same time as the product of a general movement and as the most individual act of a personality.' [2] Such an attitude implies a whole social philosophy—that familiar in the Anglo-Saxon world through the economic doctrine of Adam Smith which, in the last resort, leads back to the same source as Meinecke's optimistic view of history, namely the Leibnizian concept of *harmonia praestabilità*.[3] There is no danger, in the young Meinecke's opinion, of the individual's clashing with society, and of society's thwarting the individual's drive. Strong, self-assertive individuals make a well-integrated community, not weak and meek ones. 'Man needs the community', he writes,[4] 'both in order to be carried by it and to carry into it what is alive in him; and the more autonomous, the more individualistic he himself becomes, . . . the richer a content and the stronger an outline these circles of life will receive.' This comfortable doctrine does not know the type—unhappily so frequent in reality—who has ever anew provided raw material for the dramatist and the poet generally—the man in deadly combat with his age, the personality ground down and crushed by the mill-stones of history and fate.

Another of the root problems of the philosophy of history which Meinecke's mental organs seemed unable to grasp before the events of 1918 forced him to take it up, was the relationship of causalities and values in history, a topic to which he devoted one of his most searching self-critical investigations in 1925.[5] At any moment, certain causal tendencies are operative in the world, certain developments are pressing forward towards actualization; at any one moment also, certain moral tasks seem to be put before the human race, certain values seem to call for realization; how do the two go together? Is what struggles into life,

[1] Vol. I, 1896, p. 152. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 125.
[3] Cf. W. Stark, *The Ideal Foundations of Economic Thought*, 1943, Essay I.
[4] *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, ed. 1922, p. 9.
[5] *Kausalitäten und Werte in der Geschichte*, Historische Zeitschrift, vol. 137, 1928.

also what life ought to bring forth? How stand reality and morality to each other? Do the forces of reality carry morality forward in their own onward rush, or do they, on the contrary, run counter to the demands and duties of morality? Nowhere are the idealism of freedom, be it of the theistic or the Kantian variety, and the objective idealism of Leibniz, Ranke and the early Meinecke, more diametrically opposed to each other than at this point. It can be said, with only slight exaggeration, that, for the Meinecke of 1906 or 1907, what is in the process of becoming is at the same time what ought to become, what ought to be realized according to the calls of practical morality. Hegel's terse dictum: what is real, that is reasonable, still reverberates in his mind and looks through his pages. According to the other idealists, Christian and Kantian, every grain of goodness in the world is wrung from reality by a positive and painful effort; according to Meinecke, goodness grows like the flowers of the field. 'The greatest, just as the meanest in life', he says in an early essay,[1] 'finds its place within the brazen concatenation of cause and effect, but the greatest belongs at the same time to yet another connection, namely that of the great cultural values whose contemplation and appreciation frees us from the pain of the bitter realization that even all mental development is caught up in the mechanism of the general course of nature.' Superficially, these words seem to bear a pessimistic meaning, but really and fundamentally they hit the very height of optimism. What they claim is that the great cultural values such as goodness, truth and beauty, spring from nature as effect springs from cause, as the flower springs from the stem and the stem from the soil, spontaneously, almost semi-automatically. It is true that one must not put too mechanistic a construction upon Meinecke's words. He always knew and appreciated the role of moral effort in the affairs of men, but moral effort is not to him, at this time, what it is to Kant, a bitter struggle of the will against the spontaneous forces of life: it is much rather their continuation, their topmost layer; the realization of values is to him simply the highest achievement of the broad, unbroken, harmonious and majestic stream of happening which releases all reality from its womb.

The work in which all these ideas are most confidently and consistently applied to a concrete problem of historical research is Meinecke's first *magnum opus* entitled *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*—'The Humanitarian Ideal and the National State' [2] published in 1907. It is,

[1] *Zur Beurteilung Rankes*, 1913, reprinted in *Preussen und Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert*, 1918, cf. p. 365.

[2] *Weltbürgertum* must not be translated 'internationalism' or 'cosmopolitanism' because these terms have in English much too sober a connotation. *Weltbürgertum* means 'universal brotherhood', 'the brotherhood of man'. It is a word filled with the sentiment found in Schiller's ode *An die Freude* and Beethoven's Choral Symphony.

like all Meinecke's major efforts, a contribution to the history of ideas and deals with the development of German thinking on the subject of the state in the hundred and twenty years preceding the foundation of the *Reich* in 1871. As Meinecke sees matters, the story is one of constantly increasing realism, of a constantly growing insight into the true nature of the state. When it opens, the Germans in general, and their intellectual leaders in particular, are caught up in all sorts of over-idealistic, semi-utopian fancies which will never do for this hard and interest-dominated world. They see the state not as a nodus of power but rather as an educational institution, as a moral agent. 'That the state is in the first place power, and a power moving in accordance with its own inherent drives,' he writes of the Freiherr vom Stein, characterizing a whole generation rather than one man—'that he did not want to admit.' [1] Only slowly does the realization gain ground that a state is like an individual, in fact *is* a kind of individual, which asserts itself in the world, which desires to live the life given to it, to live it freely, fully, unrestrainedly, an individual which will not be contained and chained down by moral preaching, however well-meant and filled with pathos, but which will unfold its being and fulfil itself with irrepressible vital energy and might. In the end there appear three 'liberators' [2]—Hegel, Ranke and Bismarck, who bring German political thought into line with political realities. The state is at long last accorded 'autonomy'; it is loosened from the 'heteronomous' shackles of morality. Meinecke is full of admiration for the older thinkers such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Schiller, Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel; indeed, he sympathizes with their idealism. Yet, in spite of this sympathy, he calls their humanitarian ideal 'a poison which the body had to evacuate if it was again to function naturally', and describes Bismarck as 'the doctor' who achieved this salutary purgation.[3] *Realpolitik* was to Meinecke at this juncture the only real and realistic politics.

Now, this account of what had happened broadly agreed in its basic outline with the ideas all educated Germans had of their own mental development; they all thought that internationalism had waned and nationalism had waxed since the mid-eighteenth century. Meinecke's scholarly achievement consisted in the proof that things were not quite so simple as they appeared, that there had not, in fact, been the death of one philosophy and the birth of another, but a much more complex change which it required great finesse to bring out. Internationalism had appeared in two forms in German history; in the classicistic form which we find in, say, Humboldt and Schiller, and in the romantical form of which, among others, Novalis is a typical representative. The classicists 'misunderstood' the nature and the importance of the national state because they had their eyes fixed on the humanitarian ideal: it was

[1] Ed. 1922, p. 189. [2] *Ibid.*, 178. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

humanity on which they lavished their love, the human kind, not Germany. As Schiller said in a couplet (which, surprisingly, Meinecke fails to quote):

> Vainly you try, O Germans, to form yourselves into a nation.
> Do what you can and form more fully yourselves into men.

The Romantics were not concerned with all human beings, but only with Christendom. Their ideal was the universal empire of the Middle Ages, an empire symbolized by the Pope rather than the worldly ruler. But, as far as the national state and its 'right to live' was concerned, this philosophy came in the end to very much the same as the other. Both looked down on the national state and regarded its drive for power as unjustified and unjustifiable.

Nevertheless, in spite of this negative attitude of classicism and romanticism to the national state, both had, as Meinecke's analysis shows, also a positive contribution to make to the coming nationalism of the German people and to their successful effort to build a German power-state. The classicist ideal was closely akin to eighteenth-century rationalism and individualism and to the theory of popular sovereignty. It saw the state as growing out of a *contrat social*, almost as something that can be made by the citizens who compose it. That was not a bad ideology to adopt for a nation which had not as yet a state of its own, which was faced with the task of organizing itself in a new *Reich*. It was an ideology, moreover, which, by its whole social complexion was bound to appeal to the broad bourgeois masses, to the middle classes, and to interest them in, and mobilize them for, a programme of political action, a programme of state-making. Romanticism, on the other hand, rejected both rationalism and individualism, and put all its trust in the lasting things, in tradition. But tradition had not only brought down from the past the ideal of a universal empire which, after all, had ceased to exist, it had also brought down the reality of the concrete states, which, between them, covered the territory of the German nation, the reality of Prussia and Bavaria and Saxony and all the rest. These states were, to some extent at any rate, hallowed by the romantical writers. They were good because they had grown, because they were rooted in the sound subsoil of the popular spirit, because they had been shaped, in the course of the centuries, by generations of devoted and patriotic men, because they were the wisdom of the fathers become flesh. In these states the Germans had already a kind of political life, and that again was not a bad thing for a nation which was so apt to chase the will-of-the-wisp of universal brotherhood, which was politically so immature and childlike. The loyalty to these particular states was most intense in the nobility, and it was from its ranks that the ablest administrators had always come, and would have to come for a long time even after any

political reconstruction. If this political reconstruction could be so organized as to preserve the traditional states, there was hope that it would not only be accepted but also furthered and made into a success by the class which as yet mattered most in Germany, the nobility.

But this was just the difficulty. How could you have a new state if the old states were to be preserved? *Prima facie*, the thing looked impossible. After the virtual expulsion of Austria, the problem was essentially the problem of Prussia. It was perhaps conceivable that a citizen of the tiny dukedom of Teck should learn to love both his narrower fatherland of Teck and his wider fatherland, the *Reich*, but it was not conceivable, for many at any rate, that the Prussian should ever be anything but a Prussian. Prussia was too big to play second fiddle to the *Reich*; the *Reich* seemed unattainable while she lasted. Thus there arose the demand, especially in the south-west, that Prussia should immolate herself on the altar of German unity, in practical terms, that she should be dismembered and broken up into her constituent provinces. New life, people like the brothers von Gagern felt, is possible only when old life is removed, and nobody can serve two masters. The efforts to solve the German question by this device form the subject matter of the second half of *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, but the decisive problem is still the same as in the first part. It was unpolitical, unrealistic, utopian, Meinecke implies all along, to expect so strong and strapping an 'individual' as Prussia to commit suicide. The Gagerns simply remained in the old blindness, in the old inability to understand what a state really is. On Dec. 1, 1812, the Freiherr vom Stein had written to Count Münster: 'Put into the place of Prussia what you like, dissolve it . . . it is good, if it can be done.' [1] But it can*not* be done, Meinecke asserts (in flagrant opposition to what he was to recommend later)—as little as a living body can legitimately be dissected. No, German political unity can only come if German political diversity is preserved at the same time.

Needless to say, it was Bismarck who, in Meinecke's opinion, solved the German question without either killing the old form of German political life, the particular state, or cramping its new and wider form, the *Reich*. In his achievement old tradition and new creation seem harmoniously reconciled. Meinecke did not belong to the extreme idolaters of the Iron Chancellor, yet he, too, paid his tribute at the altar where all his fellow-nationals worshipped. The empire which emerged from the crisis of 1871 is praised by our historian as the true fulfilment of both the dominant tendencies observable in German intellectual life since the middle of the eighteenth century. It is seen both as a product of the national will and as a thing that grew and has its roots in the past, as a state which both the liberal and the conservative, both the bourgeois and the aristocratic forces in the country could accept and cherish.

[1] *Preussen und Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert*, 1918, p. 5.

The master stroke was the making of an assembly of delegates from the member states, the *Bundesrat*, into the sovereign authority of the new constitution. Thus the old was integrated in the new, the new and the old were in a manner identical, and everything was for the very best.

From this point of view, even the most sinister aspects of the Bismarckian solution appear in a favourable light. There can have been few people in the liberal camp, either in Germany or abroad, who did not object to the decidedly anti-democratic, anti-constitutional character of Prussian government prior to 1918. The masses of the population had very little say in the affairs of this greatest and most important of all the *Bundesstaaten*. But, Meinecke argues, what would have happened if Bismarck had made Prussia as democratic as the *Reich*, if, for instance, he had granted the same universal franchise? There would then have been two parliaments side by side, and it is inconceivable that they should have lived in permanent peace with each other. Just by denying to Prussia the central institution of the modern state, just by keeping her slightly antiquated, did this genius manage to construct a machine whose wheels were certain to turn in harmony, for the benefit of the whole.

This whole interpretation of the work of 1871 is, of course, no more than a particular application of Meinecke's general philosophy of universal optimism, of Meinecke's 'objective idealism', to a concrete theme. An entirely different estimate of the Bismarckian *Reich* is just as possible, an interpretation in which the whites in Meinecke's picture appear black, and the blacks white. By keeping Prussia in the form of a pre-democratic, authoritarian régime, that cleverest of all clever Machiavellians managed to exclude the liberal and the Catholic, that is to say, essentially internationalist, populations of the Rhineland and Westphalia from all influence in the state; and by throwing, in the *Bundesstaat*, the whole weight of Prussia into the scales of militarism and reaction, he kept the progressive forces of liberal Baden and Catholic Bavaria permanently impotent, thus creating that Wilhelminian *Reich* which we all know, that *Reich* whose arrogance and aggressiveness was bound to shatter the peace of the world. If Bismarck's creation was really a synthesis of the classical and romantical tendencies and traditions, as Meinecke maintains, what, we must ask, had happened to the belief in universal brotherhood of the one, and to the Christian catholicity of the other? Surely, they were not much in evidence on the parade grounds on which the German youths were trained to be *Husaren* and *Uhlanen* for the greater glory of the fatherland! Meinecke assures us that 'the idea of universalism' was still present as an 'undefinable vital breath'.[1] We must be charitable here and remember that he is writing in 1907, before the big battalions were as yet

[1] *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, p. 328.

on the march. But even if something of this 'undefinable vital breath' still seemed to lie over Germany, it cannot have been very strong, for it was all too easily extinguished in the roaring of the guns.

It was not so much nationalism which produced Meinecke's wrong-headed picture of recent German history (though nationalism had something to do with it) for Meinecke was at heart a liberal; it was much rather that 'classical liberalism' in which he indulged, that Leibnizian-Smithian-Rankean ideology which fancied that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. There is no more characteristic passage in the whole five hundred and fifty pages of *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* than the few lines with which he ends his chapter on Friedrich Schlegel. In him, Meinecke tells us, 'the concept of the nation and its self-determination was hedged round and hemmed in by ideas which threatened to stifle it'. And he continues, giving what is essentially a summary of his whole work: 'Already humanitarian enlightenment had been ethical and—*cum grano salis*—religious in content. Romantical universalism was also ethical and *par excellence* religious. The ethos here and there was different, but the rationalists and the romantics had a common adversary in the state of the *ancien régime* which, in their opinion, was unethical—and, indeed, in the power-political state as such. Both chided as blind lust of domination what is founded in the nature of the state itself, what was a consequence of its self-preservation and self-determination. They moralized from the outside instead of trying to understand the nature of the state from the inside; they failed to comprehend that the ethical has, besides its universal, an individual and concrete aspect, and that, under this aspect, even the apparent immorality of the state's power-political egoism can be ethically justified. *For what springs from the deepest individual nature of a being cannot be unethical.*'[1] In the discussion of a man of Meinecke's stature, harsh words do not flow easily from the pen. Yet can this attitude be called anything but foolish? Probably the older Meinecke, the Meinecke of 1950, a much tried and much chastened man, would have agreed.

II

The optimistic 'classical liberalism' of this early period asserted itself for the last time in Meinecke's courageous address to the Berlin Academy of January 27, 1916, entitled *Germanischer und Romanischer Geist im Wandel der deutschen Geschichtsauffassung*. Following Rankean conceptions, Meinecke asserted that, in spite of the war, Germany and France were and remained a cultural community. The struggle would only serve to awaken the potentialities which slumbered in the one

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 91 *seq.* Our italics.

nation as well as in the other.[1] Two years later, there is a radical change of mood. On November 10, 1918, Meinecke made the following entry into his diary: 'The dam has broken. How has this come about? In the last analysis through impersonal causes?' [2] Brief as it is, this last sentence allows us to look deeply into our historian's mind. It shows him parting with the *Identitätsphilosophie* of his youth, the theory that all conspires, by some hidden principle, for the best of all. There are, he now begins to see, certain causal tendencies operative in history, which run counter to men's dreams and wishes and cannot be controlled by them.[3] A cleavage opens up before his eyes between the Is and the Ought. Henceforth his world-view is dualistic and laden with doubt and anxiety.

The first of his basic convictions which Meinecke saw himself forced to abandon under the impact of events was his conception of the relationship between individual action and objective tendencies in history. The statesman and the drift of development had been seen as co-operators before, as equal partners in a synthesizing process which accommodates and does justice to them both; now they become antagonists, enemies at war with each other. 'The [political] personality', Meinecke now writes, 'can reach the height of historical achievement only by a hard, painful, and often tragic struggle with the supra-individual powers.' [4] There is no longer a *harmonia praestabilità* at the back of things which would keep them in step. But it is not only man and mass, the individual and the drift of the age, which confront each other as contenders for power and domination, it is also man and *moira*, man and fate, and the dice is heavily loaded in favour of the latter. Meinecke discovers the problem of freedom versus necessity to which he had been blind before, and history becomes for him, what it had been to Machiavelli, an unending contest between *fortuna* and *virtù*. The happy insistence that man is free, so characteristic of the first period, gives way to the searching question: how free is man? Meinecke never found a satisfactory answer to this query, neither in historical experience nor in philosophical speculation. Even at the end of his life he called 'universal history' an 'enigmatic texture of necessity and freedom'.[5] The common run of historians does not worry about metaphysical enigmata of this kind; Meinecke lived with it as one lives with a skeleton in the cupboard, and its presence overshadowed all his work and thought after 1918.

[1] Cf. especially the final passus as reprinted in *Preussen und Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert*, 1918, p. 121.

[2] *Strassburg, Freiburg, Berlin, 1901–1919, Erinnerungen*, 1949, p. 271.

[3] Cf. particularly *Nach der Revolution*, 1919, p. 10 *seq.* where there is a good deal of talk of the 'iron chain of causes', of 'unavoidable destiny', etc., etc.

[4] *Staat und Persönlichkeit*, 1933, preface.

[5] *Aphorismen und Skizzen zur Geschichte*, 1942, p. 30.

Meinecke himself said good-bye to his early philosophy in the essay (already mentioned) entitled *Kausalitäten und Werte in der Geschichte* which it must have cost him a great deal to write and even more to publish. The triad Leibniz—Goethe—Ranke had never doubted that whatever the play of the causal forces in the universe had created was in itself eminently valuable, for was it not an emanation of that mysterious life which is the value of all values, an incarnation and concretization of the divine? Coming down to earth, Meinecke abandoned this monism for a much more complex and, indeed, internally riven world-view. There is a sphere of reality, he now taught, in which ideas and ideals have it all their own way. This is the world of culture in the narrowest sense of the word, the world of contemplation as he also sometimes calls it. Religion and art, philosophy and scientific speculation belong to it. Over against it, there stands another sphere of reality in which ideas and ideals have no place. Here things are happening of themselves, as it were, as the senseless and meaningless workings-out of independent and uncontrollable natural forces. Through many stretches of history, for instance, the population-figure has been going up, because the *geistfremde* Malthusian principle of population has been at work. The social and political life of men is taking place in *between* these two spheres, in an intermediate belt of existence, in which values and causalities clash and come to grips with each other, in which a compromise—in so far as one is possible—is being worked out between Nature and Spirit, in which there tends to establish itself an equilibrium of the Is and the Ought which can lie higher up or lower down but which in any case will be unstable and shifting and ever threatened by the blind and brutal powers welling up from below. It is in this dusky region that the scene of our active life is laid, and we can never hope to escape it. It is in this dusky region, too, that the historian must do his work. It is well-nigh impossible for him to achieve a proper understanding of the phenomena entrusted to his care, for where Nature and the Spirit are mixed, everything must appear strangely contradictory. The face of history is a sphinx-like face. The enigma concerning freedom and necessity re-emerges here in the form of the inescapable but insoluble question, how far reality is shaped by the free and responsible deeds of men, and how far by the blind and imperative needs of life. 'Culture resting on spontaneity, on the creation of spiritual and moral values, and yet closely tied to the causalities of the biological and mechanical kind—that is the riddle which the historian cannot solve.' [1] Like the Troglodyte, he is condemned for ever to grope about in the dark.

These considerations mark an open retreat from the position of objective idealism. 'The systems of *Identität*,' Meinecke wrote in his

[1] *Kausalitäten und Werte*, as reprinted in *Schaffender Spiegel*, 1948, p. 82.

great work of the 'twenties, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte*, 'which wanted to fuse Spirit and Nature, reason and reality in an intimate . . . unity and harmony, have collapsed, because the construction carrying them has proved too weak in face of the undeniable facts of experience and history.' Hegelianism comes in now for particularly pungent criticism and condemnation. Meinecke accuses it, and justly, of an 'inclination all too quickly to sanction and to ethicize factual developments', and pillories it for its unfortunate tendency to justify and, indeed, to idealize all the excesses of power politics, including even war.[1] Is it not clear that in and behind these criticisms of the author of the *Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* there hides also some frank self-criticism of the author of *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*? Few men have ever more clearly and contritely taken leave of their own past than Friedrich Meinecke.

But every retreat has a double direction and plies between two fixed points—the one to be forsaken, the other to be taken up. Where was Meinecke going after 1918? If we remain within Dilthey's ternary scheme (which is reasonable because it is singularly fitted to characterize the mental journeyings of our author), we can say that he could either have moved towards the 'idealism of freedom', i.e. the Kantian or Christian view of the world, or towards a more materialistic interpretation of reality. Confronted with this choice, he decided for the latter alternative. This does not mean that he ever became a true materialist; he was too deeply imbued with the general idealistic tradition of his country to turn, say, Darwinian or Spencerian. But a good deal of the materialistic outlook and mode of thought did infiltrate into his philosophy and established itself there, as we shall see. And this is characteristic—characteristic both of Meinecke and of objective idealism in general. For 'objective' idealism is much less idealistic than its label would lead one to assume. The objective spirit or world-soul which it sets up as the ultimate reality is all too closely connected with the material world to be more than an aspect or content of it, and little more than a shift in emphasis is needed for an 'idealist' of this variety to slip into some kind of materialism or semi-materialism as happened to Meinecke after he had, through war and revolution, become aware of the disharmonies of life.

The subject of investigation to which Meinecke turned his attention after his philosophical disillusionment was the great theme of power politics, of Machiavellism. Of all the phenomena of the middle sphere where man and fate are locked in battle and values and causalities strive against each other, the state is the most important, and the attraction of the matter for the historian is obvious. Here, if anywhere, past and

[1] Second German ed., 1925, pp. 469 and 531. Cf. also *ibid.*, 459 *seq.*, 505 *seq.*, 536 *seq.* English text, below, pp. 377, 425, 368 *seq.*, 405 *seq.*, 428 *seq.*

future, history and politics meet and can enlighten and promote each other.[1] But Meinecke's choice of subject was by no means determined by theoretical considerations only. He also had a very practical object in view when he wrote his book on the doctrine of *raison d'état*, namely, to prove to the world that Germany was not the only country which had, in modern times, pursued a ruthless and sometimes immoral power-policy. The theory of Machiavellism was developed by an Italian; its most consummate practitioner was a Frenchman, namely Richelieu; and it was French history which showed its worst excesses in St. Bartholomew's Night and the murders of August and September, 1792. As for the English, the maxim 'my country right or wrong' has sunk so deeply into their subconsciousness that they have never even felt the presence of a moral problem in power-political action; yet this very fact has led them to the 'most effective kind of Machiavellism' in practice.[2] Meinecke does not exactly undertake to whitewash Germany, but he insists and tries to demonstrate that, in Machiavellism, we are confronted with an all-human, and all too human, phenomenon.

Now, throughout modern history, two theories concerning power politics have run side by side and contended with each other for the mastery of men's minds. The one has come down from the Stoa and the Christian fathers; it condemned the state and all its works, and induced a Jakob Burckhardt to express the opinion that the state—the state as such—was evil. The other is of more recent origin and assumes *vis-à-vis* the statesman, even the statesman greedy for domination and bent upon conquest, an understanding attitude. It sees in the *pleonexia* of the state a phenomenon which it is useless to bemoan because it is simply natural. The state can as little rid itself of its drive for self-assertion as we *qua* individuals can rise above our desire to survive. In fact, the two tendencies are in a manner identical because the state is essentially a vital something, a vital being, which must live and even grow like all other organic wholes. Meinecke's materialism consisted in this that he took his place alongside the second tradition, the tradition which tends to divorce politics from morality and develops it along 'realistic' lines. 'The state is bent upon power as man on nourishment, indeed, it is even more insatiable than he is . . . This . . . insight was our starting-point. . . . So far one may and must go in one's concessions to the naturalistic empiricism of the late nineteenth century, to all the facts of the natural and nocturnal side of human existence, to the mechanical and biological causalities, which modern positivism . . . is wont to underline.' [3] Positivism is indeed one-sided in its emphasis of those aspects of political life which the Victorians called 'unlovely', but whether one-sided or not, it seems to the Meinecke of this period to

[1] Cf. *loc. cit.*, p. 359, below p. 287. [2] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 488 *seq.*, below pp. 392 *seq.*
[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 503, below p. 403.

have understood the essential truth, the truth that the lust for power is indomitable and rises up from the very roots of reality, from the darkest and most unfathomable depths of being.

Meinecke found the choice between the two competing points of view rather easy. He describes and distinguishes them in one connection as 'realism' and 'moralism',[1] and these words themselves show why he embraced the one and rejected and scorned the other. Men like Machiavelli knew what the world was like; men like Hugo Grotius did not. The moralists lived in a dream world and pursued such phantasmagorias as the best state and the natural law; the realists dealt with tangible facts and the forces which actually move the political mechanism. Their attitude was akin to that of the scholar and the scientist, and the historian must, for this reason alone, take his place by their side. All votaries of learning, even if they are historians and political theorists rather than physicists and biologists, must concern themselves with things as they are, and not as they ought to be; to turn from reality to speculation is to turn from the modern mind back to mediaeval obscurantism, is to extinguish the light of scholarship and science. If there are still thinkers who, like the monks of old, assume a pulpit tone when they come to speak of political realities—Meinecke was probably thinking at times of his contemporary and fellow-national Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster when he wrote *Die Idee der Staatsräson* [2] —their appearance is to be regretted as a grotesque anachronism. Thus Meinecke fancied that his whole approach was determined, not by opinion, but by scholarship, not by prejudice, but by science.

A context in which we can clearly discern the character of Meinecke's point of view occurs in his discussion of Frederick the Great. Cesare Borgia's henchman in the Romagna had been a certain Ramiro d'Orco who had in the course of time become thoroughly hateful to the local population. Borgia, setting aside all the man's claims to his gratitude, had him executed, and executed in such a horrible manner that the people of the Romagna were as much disgusted as they were relieved. Frederick the Great found this deed, this misdeed, appalling. What right had the arch-criminal Borgia, he asks, to punish this fiend, who was, after all, only his own self in miniature? Meinecke does not judge in the same way. He refuses to be swept off his feet by moral indignation; he tries to understand even where he cannot approve, even where he recoils from the facts. What happened when Ramiro d'Orco was cut in two and his gory halves publicly exhibited on the market square of Cesena, was the establishment of a state of law and order by a method opposed to law and order—was the realization of a good end by a bad means. 'That even in this case a gruesome *raison d'état* was at work and struggled out of darkness towards the light', he writes against Frederick,

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 175, below p. 139. [2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 531 *seq.*, below p. 425.

here the mouthpiece of the despised moralizing attitude, '—that he refused to acknowledge.' [1]

The general practice of the principle of *raison d'état*—the pursuit of political, especially power-political, ends by all necessary means, if need be, even the most immoral ones—seemed to Meinecke a typical phenomenon of the middle sphere, the sphere between causalities and values, Nature and Spirit, Is and Ought. He calls the state an 'amphibian creature',[2] a cross between two elements, one high, one low. 'By its uncanny connection with certain verities and values of political life', we read in *Die Idee der Staatsräson*, 'Machiavellism became a vital power in history.' [3] We must not criticize a Machiavelli or a Richelieu, a Campanella or a Bismarck because it is a fact that they were not altogether free, that the ships which they steered, or for the steering of which they provided textbooks, were tied to their own pre-determined course, however hard the man at the wheel might work his rudder. The state, Meinecke says in one connection, 'is in bond to the natural laws of the struggle for survival'; in another he speaks of the 'iron logic of power'; and in a third he calls 'the discovery of the necessary character of political action . . . the mighty kernel of truth in Machiavelli's *Principe*'.[4] The list of these quotations could easily be lengthened. The elementary biotic 'striving for security and self-preservation at any price' [5] is behind all conduct according to *raison d'état*, and to condemn and curse it is about as reasonable as to condemn and curse the leopard for its spots.

But there is a second reason why the historian should not condemn and curse Machiavellism, even though his conscience can never condone it. The practice and policy of *raison d'état* is not devoid of a certain ethical side or aspect. Meinecke's argument in this respect is a little diffuse and ill-organized, but three or four important points seem to stand out. The state, and the modern state in particular, is not only identified with power but also concerned with culture. It is the shell as it were within which all the higher life of the nation is taking place, and if that shell were broken, the cold blast of the world's winds would chill and kill it. Secondly, the very cunning which characterizes the Machiavellian prince has definite salutary consequences. Clever fox that he is, he will calculate the pros and cons of every step and thereby repress his passions and resort to reason. Machiavellism is usually described as the maxim that the end justifies the means; Meinecke emphasizes that it is also the doctrine according to which the end controls the means. He saw in the development, through science and technology, of means so

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 366, below p. 292.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 503, below p. 404.
[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 250, below p. 199.
[4] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 372, 464, 368 *seq.*, below pp. 297, 373, 294 *seq.*
[5] *Loc. cit.*, p. 265, below p. 212.

powerful that they can hardly be controlled, the most unfortunate feature of recent times, and his remarks in this respect [1] are even more true since the invention of the hydrogen bomb than they were in 1924. Thirdly, the statesman who pursues power for its own sake may come to pursue it for the sake of a higher value, may apply it in the service of the common weal. There is a deal of difference between the man who says 'l'état c'est moi' and the man who describes himself as 'le premier domestique' or 'le premier ministre du peuple'. Of course, even Frederick of Prussia, who loved the latter phrases, was actuated by the drive for domination; heaven and hell cannot be neatly separated in politics, and this makes it so amphibian a phenomenon, so two-sided a sword. But the very fact that there is an angelic side to it as well as a demoniac one should not escape notice. Finally, the statesman, though in the grip of powers far stronger than he is, is yet not altogether a puppet dangling on a string. We do not know and cannot say how free man is, but we must not regard him as an abject slave. Perhaps we come near to Meinecke's true opinion if we characterize it with the help of a catch-phrase coined by Auguste Comte, the father of positivism, to whose way of thinking Meinecke came nearer than he ever realized. Comte speaks of a *fatalité modifiable* of social life, and something like this Meinecke must have had in mind when he thought of *raison d'état* as 'the vein of the state developing from the natural towards the spiritual',[2] as a phenomenon which roots in and grows out of the soil of causality and yet stretches upward towards the empyrean of values, the reach of freedom. In this spirit, Meinecke also conceived his postulate of political ethics: 'To spiritualize and moralize the state in which one lives, even if one knows that this can never wholly succeed, is, next to the demand to raise one's own personality spiritually and morally to a higher plane, the highest of the claims which can be laid upon ethical conduct.' [3]

It is at this point that a critique of Meinecke from the position of the 'idealism of freedom' can begin. If it is true, as he admits, that man has some influence on the course of events, then the question arises whether his aim can ever be legitimately less than the mastery of these events. If it is true, as he also admits, that we have, all of us, a firm inner conviction of our liberty and responsibility, then it must surely be maintained by the moral man that we have, none of us, a right to plead the excuse of *force majeure* before the judgment seat of ethics. Meinecke himself comes to meet this argument half way. He distinguishes the internal policies of the modern state from its external policies. 'In the interior of the states', he writes, 'the *raison d'état* can remain in harmony with law and morality because this is possible and feasible, because

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 527, below p. 421 f.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 511, below p. 409.
[3] *Schaffender Spiegel*, p. 90.

no other power interferes with that of the state.' But in the relation of one state to another, this is not so. 'Law can only be preserved if there is a strong hand which is able and ready to enforce it. Otherwise there supervenes the state of nature in which each one tries to secure his supposed right with the means which are at his disposal.' This precisely is the position in the field of world affairs. 'Above states', Hegel says, 'there is no *praetor*.' [1] We may, for argument's sake, admit that this is so today in point of fact. But it is not fact that we are discussing here, it is possibilities. Meinecke argues all along as if there could never be a judge above sovereign nations, as if the laws of nature themselves had decreed that world peace should never be more than an armed armistice. And this, surely, must be denied. Meinecke himself knows full well that Machiavellism is essentially a modern phenomenon. As long as the power of the high and mighty was yet embedded in an all-embracing matrix of morality, as it was in the Middle Ages, it remained comparatively harmless, even though all the temptations to its use and abuse which have reared their head since the Renaissance were already present under the surface, and, indeed, even though they already showed themselves at times. The moralization of international relations may be a daunting task; it remains a task of modern man all the same. What keeps the law of the jungle going in the sphere of power politics is not natural necessity but the immoral cynicism of the few and the moral inertia of the many.

As for Friedrich Meinecke, his weakness manifestly consisted in his total inability even to conceive of a more closely knit world order. In spite of his emphatic demand 'that the . . . deification of the state . . . must cease',[2] he could not bring himself to see the Leviathan tamed, the ghost of Machiavellism laid. The national state is no longer to him the supreme value, but it is still an ultimate value. But even this is to exalt it above its proper station. For this reason, the spirit and trend of *Die Idee der Staatsräson* is not so different from that of *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* as might be expected. In both books there is an attempt to defend the state against the 'encroachments' of an ideal which is supposed to be alien and incompatible with its nature. Meinecke's conversion to a new philosophy had indeed been genuine, but it had been woefully inadequate at the same time. If he had entrusted himself, after 1918, to the 'idealism of freedom', instead of dallying half way between the objective idealism of Goethe and the materialism of Darwin, he would have learned to understand that the state has indeed a place in the great hierarchy of being, but that it is only a humble place, a place nearer the bottom than the apex. He would then have realized that there can only be one categorical imperative for the statesman—

[1] *Die Idee der Staatsräson, loc. cit.*, p. 17, below p. 14.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 537, below p. 429.

as for every other man—namely to seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and that all the evils in our life—including those of Machiavellism—spring from one source, namely men's wanton habit of raising the things of this world to a pinnacle of glory to which they have no claim.

III

It is a question which would remain speculative even if we had a deep-digging and well-documented biography of Meinecke, how far the events of the year 1933, Hitler's accession to power, influenced his thought, and in particular how far they prepared that half-turn towards the 'idealism of freedom' which is characteristic of his closing years. Much can perhaps be adduced in support of the opinion that the change of heart came only after 1945, after what Meinecke himself has called 'the German catastrophe'. But it cannot be overlooked that serious doubts concerning the soundness of 'objective idealism', even in the reduced and sobered semi-materialistic version which he had adopted, appeared a good deal earlier, foretelling the virtual abandonment of the position which he had striven so hard to maintain after life itself seemed to have condemned it. In a lecture which he gave to the Prussian Academy of Sciences on the fiftieth anniversary of Ranke's death, i.e. in 1936—a lecture which is still in essence a panegyric—he raised the question whether Ranke 'had been able fully to appreciate the momentous problem of theodicy, the existence of evil in the world',[1] and answered it, by implication at any rate, in the negative. After the victory of a movement which he regarded as the expression of dark and destructive, if deep, national forces, the problem of evil in history seemed to him to clamour more than any other for the attention of the philosophically inclined historian.

One of the flaws which Meinecke now began to detect in Ranke's over-all conception of history, was the failure to allow for the influence of chance or accident on the course of events.[2] The longer he lived, and the less he liked what he saw before his eyes, the more convinced Meinecke became that this was a major factor in historical life and one whose intervention was almost totally evil. In one connection he calls it 'a gateway through which something senseless constantly threatens to break into history and often enough has broken into it'.[3] In fact, chance now became one of his whipping boys, the culprit who was responsible for many, if not for all the evils which have befallen Germany in this century. The personal character of the Kaiser, the

[1] *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, ed. 1946, Appendix, p. 628.
[2] *Loc. cit.* and *Aphorismen und Skizzen zur Geschichte*, 1953, p. 66 *seq.*
[3] *Aphorismen*, p. 67.

election of the weakling and dotard Hindenburg, the obsessional nature of Hitler, even General Gröner's diabetes are, in *Die Deutsche Katastrophe* of 1946, held up as so many 'accidents', unnecessary in themselves, which have pushed the cart deeper and deeper into the mud. It is difficult not to see in this *deus ex machina* a device of special pleading, and a pretty poor one at that. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Montesquieu, in a passage of his *Considérations sur les Romains* (which Meinecke himself quotes in a work of this period),[1] had already given the right answer to such attempts to procure a national alibi. Accidents do occur in history, he had said in substance. But their power to change the drift of development comes *only* from the general tendencies of the age with which they link up. Hitler was not something that happened to Germany. He was the product of her history and psychology.

However, the emphasis on chance, on the role of purely accidental unmotivated happenings on the drama of history, is not the only new feature of Meinecke's historical thinking after 1933. Kindred in nature but more fundamental in import is the fact that he now begins to speculate in terms of destiny, of fate, of fatedness. The concept of causality, appearing in the inter-war period, thickens, as it were; man's freedom, his ability to master the inherent tendencies of reality, is seen in dimmer and dimmer colours. 'Do you not see, ant, that you are merely crawling on the great wheel of fatality'—this sombre word of Herder's is symbolic of Meinecke's mood in these years.[2] His greatest work, *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, first published in 1936, bears many traits of a pessimistic outlook. The historian's task, we are told in it, is a tragic one. He perceives, as he works through his materials, that life is full of possibilities, of promises, of hopes; but he perceives also that few of them are ever allowed to come to fruition. He beholds many seedlings which, if they could have grown according to their own nature, would have become straight and handsome trees, but which the unkind blast of reality has broken into crooked form. 'Full historism', he writes, 'implies the ability of resignation, and demands respect for fate.'[3] Nature and necessity are our masters, and who can escape their empire?

Removed from the editorial chair of the *Historische Zeitschrift*, forbidden to teach and cut off from public life in general, Meinecke retired into a private world of his own which even the power of totalitarian dictatorship could not destroy, into the congenial company of the men whom he loved most—Möser, Herder and Goethe. *Die Entstehung des Historismus* is in essence an investigation of their view of history, preceded by a study of those predecessors outside Germany which made their work possible. To write on the subject was an old wish of

[1] *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, ed. 1946, p. 146.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 418. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 359.

Meinecke's. Already *Die Idee der Staatsräson* contains, explicitly as well as implicitly, a good deal that is relevant to the theme. Machiavelli was not only the forefather of modern politics but also the pathbreaker of modern historism. He had to be; the very logic of his attitude to the problem of power forced him forward in the direction which, in the fullness of time, was to produce that efflorescence of historical understanding and scholarship whose intellectual foundations Meinecke was striving to lay bare. For Machiavelli was not concerned with the state in the abstract, with the ideal state, but with states in the concrete, states of flesh and blood, so to speak. He had to see them as something real and vital, something that had developed and was still tending to develop and to grow, had to know their conditions of existence and calculate their powers and potentialities—in short, had to turn towards that *factual* aspect of political life which it is the task of the historian to study and to understand in retrospect. From the great Florentine there leads, through the seventeenth and eighteenth century doctrine of the 'interests of states', a link to Ranke and his school on which, in *Die Idee der Staatsräson*, many a penetrating side-glance is bestowed.

Die Entstehung des Historismus is thus, in more than one sense, a sequel to the book on *Machiavellism*. But it takes up the story much later, with Shaftesbury (1671–1713) and Leibniz (1646–1716), and it moves, as these two names already indicate, on a much higher intellectual level, the level of philosophical speculation, one could almost say, the level of the metaphysics of history. It is not a history of historical writing, but a history of historical thinking which Meinecke is trying to present. Now, the general conviction before Meinecke's work appeared was, and had always been, that what is known as historism is substantially a German achievement and dates only from the romantical period, that historism developed as a countermovement against French rationalism and English utilitarianism. Meinecke shows this view to be false. The new historical sense which conquered the world in the nineteenth century had roots which go back deep into the past, and it was the joint product of all the three leading cultural nations of Europe. It had always been allowed that Edmund Burke had had something to do with the awakening of the historical spirit, but Burke had been seen as an isolated phenomenon, an Irishman in England, almost a freak in the country where he lived and wrote. Meinecke corrects this impression. He shows that behind and before Burke there is a numerous group of authors, none of them outstanding in isolation, but all together most significant in conjunction, who can be summed up as pre-romantics and who taught all Europe to see the past with new eyes: men like Ferguson, Percy, Young, Warton, Hurd, Wood, Lowth and others. And behind and before them again there are the historians Robertson, Gibbon, and Hume who must not simply be set

down as rationalists but whose works, if they are properly studied, reveal an incipient historical sense which is no longer totally different from the later Rankean approach. Hume, indeed, was one of its prime inspirers. By shaking the naïve confidence of the old-style rationalists in the universal applicability of the calculus of cause and effect, he became a great liberator of the human mind and prepared the ground for those who saw that the understanding of the facts of history demands methods and mental modes different from those which are at home in mathematics and mechanics and other sciences of the material world.

But not only these British authors (who were, after all, reared in an atmosphere of empiricism and hence realism)—even the French rationalists, the very men whom the historians of Ranke's generation are commonly said to have conquered and ousted, are shown by Meinecke to have significantly contributed to the new conception of history. He has a particularly fine chapter on Voltaire. Certainly, Voltaire had an over-simplified view of history, regarding it, as he did, as an eternal tug-of-war between reason and unreason, reason slowly gaining the upper hand. If that had been all, he would have been a useless limb on the tree of historical scholarship. But there is more to his work than that. There is, first of all, his giant appetite for facts, his insatiable curiosity. Abandoning the traditional limitation of historiography to the field of political and military events, he broke new ground on all sides and opened up vast new continents for scholarship to master and to occupy. The very weakness of rationalism, the blind belief in the uniformity of human nature, made him study man in all ages and countries, man in all his manifestations. This was nothing but pure gain for the future. But it was even more fortunate that Voltaire, in pursuing his studies, was forced to discover and to acknowledge the paramount importance of the irrational forces in the world as it really is—those irrational forces which the common run of rationalists had simply disregarded in the past and thereby so much falsified the picture of history and reality as to make it into a bloodless and distorting caricature. 'The achievements of the historiography of enlightenment', Meinecke writes, 'have, by their own weight, helped to awaken historism. They demonstrated, often against their own wishes, the power —indeed, the overwhelming power—of the irrational. There were two ways to escape the paralysing pressure of this insight. Turgot, Condorcet, and later Comte went the one and announced the gradual recession of unreason and the victory of reason. Herder and Möser went the other; they laid the abstract ideal of rationality aside and lovingly embraced the values which are contained in the world of irrationality.' [1] Thus they achieved a wider as well as deeper view of the past and its phenomena, the view which is at the root of all modern

[1] *Aphorismen*, p. 33.

historical research and classically expressed in Leopold von Ranke's historiography. For them the world of yesteryear is no longer dead, as it had been for the rationalists, no longer a lumber room into which one might peep for curiosity's sake but in which one cannot hope to find anything of value. It is, on the contrary, full of human values which the historian is called to revivify by the magic power of his art, drawing the necessary strength from the deepest depths of his own living personality.

Speaking of more technical aspects, Meinecke sees the essence of historism in two characteristic conceptions: the concept of development and the concept of individuality. The idea of development is different both from the idea of progressive perfection and from the idea of progressive unfolding. Those who see evolution in terms of progressive perfection devalue the past because they depress it to the position of a mere preparation of the perfect state, as if it had no value of its own, but merely an imputed value, a value projected back into it. Those who see growth in terms of progressive unfolding again devalue the past because they see it as a mere making explicit of what is implicitly given from the start, as a mere laying out and showing forth of properties which are themselves fixed. Both are missing the point. The course of development is in truth neither determined from the front nor from the back, neither from above nor from below. It is an unfolding in *freedom*, a *search* for perfection. It is characterized by the *plasticity* of that which develops, a plasticity which leads to ever new formations and forms as the developing subject meets the objects which are around it and comes to terms with them through conflict and co-operation.

We have just spoken of a subject of development. The word is not meant to describe individual men so much as a wide variety of historical individualities. Reality is for Meinecke essentially an *abyssos* of individuality,[1] a womb, ever fruitful, which brings forth, in a constant process of gestation, new and ever new units of life which are, all of them, unique. Every country is such an individuality, every nation, every state, every form of art, indeed, every thing that is in so far as it develops. The concepts of development and individuality are correlative for our historian. Take a state as a convenient example—Britain, France, Germany, whichever it may be. It appears in history as a vital entity which receives its unity from certain form-giving forces which are active in its depth, which well up from a centre—an entelechy, a quasi-soul—and is thus constituted as a whole, as an identity, in a word, as an individuality. But this individuality does not endure such as it is. It has in itself a vital tendency, appropriate to its essence, towards its own unfolding and perfection, and it must constantly shape and reshape

[1] This expressive phrase was first coined by Friedrich Schlegel. Cf. *Aphorismen*, p. 96.

itself as it comes to grips with its setting in society and nature. (We see in such ideas the persistent kernel of Meinecke's philosophy.) Historism, the origin of which Meinecke is studying, is ready—has itself become an 'individuality' on the level of ideas—as soon as the two key concepts of individuality and development are brought together and fused. 'Individuality and individual development', Meinecke writes, 'are the two fundamental concepts of the treatment of history which can be called historism in the good sense of the word and which reaches its climax in Ranke's achievement. . . . "It is true", we read in [Ranke's History of] the Popes, "each individual life develops according to laws inherent in it from its own spiritual root: identical with itself it moves down the ages. But at the same time it is constantly under general influences which powerfully act on the course of its development." For this reason', Meinecke remarks, 'the results of this development cannot be calculated in advance, and the variety of its phenomena is without number: "Inexhaustible in its plasticity is the nature of man." '[1] The historian's crowning reward is the experience—the rapt contemplation —of the human world in all its overwhelming wealth of form and content.

This is what the book teaches us on the origins of the modern historical mind. But it also teaches us, if we only know how to read it aright, a good deal about the mind of its author, his anxieties and speculations. We see behind the smooth flow of its sentences a man in search of consolation, and also a man searching his own soul, a man trying to measure his own guilt and the guilt of his kind.

Consolation Meinecke found in rich measure in the literature which he studied. He notes with obvious pleasure Hume's observation that, in the affairs of men, periods of force and violence alternate with periods of pacification, law-building and law-abidingness. The victory of the mailed fist is never the end of the story, but always a new beginning. Men cannot for long live with their hands on the hilt. The power of habit, if nothing else, will sooner or later induce them to settle down into more stable and agreeable forms of existence. 'From the original usurpation and rebellion spring authority, right and obligation.' 'Mankind need not despair at the eternal inroad of destructive forces, for eternally there are also quiet powers at work transforming the destroyers' deed into a new construction of order.' And the same swing of the pendulum is noticeable also in the history of ideas. A philosophy may seem conquered and annihilated and its adversary firmly in control of men's minds. Yet, as the historian perceives again and again, in secret it is already gathering strength for a new assault which often will lead it to unhoped-for, seemingly 'impossible' victory. Who could have predicted, in the age of the *encyclopaedists*, the triumph of romanticism in

[1] *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, ed. 1946, p. 624.

Europe, which was yet not very far off? It is obvious that Meinecke is sometimes thinking of his own country when he writes passages such as these. 'Polarity', he says in a particularly revealing passage, 'determines not only the development of the spiritual life of the West as a whole, but also the life of the different nations in themselves. Every nation bears in itself polarities of its own character, contradictory tendencies . . . scales, as it were, which swing up and down . . . Even that which perishes in this dialectic development will never perish completely, but continue to act "in suspension".' [1] Who can doubt that Meinecke is here airing his hopes that Germany may yet turn from Hitler back to Herder, from Goebbels back to Goethe, from the jack-boot back to the humanitarian ideal?

But all these considerations seemed to Meinecke in the last resort unavailing, unless they could be anchored in the philosophical subsoil. We must go beyond history, if we wish to find reassurance in history. After reading Spranger's essay on Goethe, Meinecke noted: 'Goethe comes . . . too quickly to the great universal consolation of a symphonic harmony of God, world and man. He knows indeed all the abysses of life, but he looks rapidly across them upwards to the stars. Today, we can think of abysses and stars as reconciled only in infinity.' [2] To advance from an empirical view of historical fact to a metaphysics of existence, was one of the underlying preoccupations of Meinecke when he wrote *Die Entstehung des Historismus*.

This drift towards metaphysics was not, however, due only to a desire for consolation. It had a second and perhaps even more poignant root. Honest man that he was, Meinecke put to himself the question whether he and his fellow-historians had not to bear part of the blame for the barbarization of Germany, and he answered it in the affirmative. Historism, with its tendency to see something valuable in all phenomena that the currents of development have washed up, was necessarily a doctrine of relativity. It relativized all the great values—truth, virtue, and the rest—until nothing absolute remained to which men, feeble as they are, could cling. The result has been well described as an anarchy of values, and that anarchy weakened the moral fibre, especially of the educated, until few if any firm convictions were left to them. Meinecke realized that this was one of the facts which had made the triumph of Hitlerism possible. He speaks of a 'Pandora's box' which historism had opened, of 'wounds' which it had inflicted and which it must try to heal.[3] Meinecke was not only trying to find 'the historian's consolation', he was also willing to assume the historian's burden. The couplet of Schiller which forms the motto of *Die Idee der Staatsräson*, but which would have fitted *Die Entstehung des Historismus* even better, is a

[1] *Ibid.*, 215 *seq.*, 248 *seq.* [2] *Aphorismen*, pp. 38 *seq.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 23; *Historismus*, pp. 4 and 522.

poetical formulation of the excruciating question which plagued Meinecke, mind and conscience:

> Tell me, how is it that ever anew appearances alter,
> And that yet there is rest in the inconstant form?

But does this formula not beg the question? Is there really rest in the inconstant form? Can the historian, who sees everything in flux, discover a shore beyond the stream? Meinecke's opinion was that we cannot indeed focus it clearly, but that we can divine its presence in the haze. He entrusted himself to the guidance of Goethe and thought that *he* could give the final answer to the historian's most difficult problem —the problem of relativity. *Die Entstehung des Historismus* is not only a history of historical speculation, but also a history of neoplatonic thought. For in Neoplatonism, that 'golden chain of spirits' [1] which embraced Herder and Goethe among its most brilliant links, Meinecke believed the historian could find a doctrine of salvation, a message of release. It seemed to him to have implemented 'the boldest philosophical design—to do justice at once to being and to becoming'.[2]

Goethe was as free of dogmatic belief in absolute values as any man, and yet he never sank into that morass of moral relativism which swallowed up the historians of later days. In particular, he never wavered when it came to moral action, to practical decisions. He always asserted his own ideals in the most unambiguous fashion. What was the secret of that singular man? Quite simply the conviction, so typically neoplatonist, that his own subjectivity, however limited, however insignificant, was yet an emanation from the great mainspring of all being, the god-nature that fills the universe and that is the source of all that is, of all that is becoming, of all that is valuable. Even if our small voice is no more than one strain in a symphony of boundless dimension, we must yet make ourselves heard, because if we were to be silent, that symphony would not be quite so rich and beautiful as it can be, and as it is meant to be. Meinecke calls this 'perhaps the only possible synthesis of relativizing and absolutizing, of idealizing and individualizing thought'.[3] He felt happy and at home in it; it helped him to reconcile the relativism of historical scholarship with the absolutism needed in the pursuit of decency and goodness; and it also helped him, to some extent at any rate, to forget, or rather to transfigure, the cruel reality which enclosed him on all sides. As he sat in his study and turned the pages of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* and of *Faust*, the feeling stole over him that here he beheld, in spite of everything, the essential truth. Evil is indeed an undeniable reality in the world, but only according to the physical order of things; for the philosopher who is concerned, not with

[1] *Aphorismen*, p. 56.
[2] *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, ed. 1946, p. 144. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 608.

the things that today are and tomorrow are no more, but with the things that last, with *ultimate* reality, it need not be more than a shadow which passes across the face of the sun, hiding it for a while from mortal eyes but leaving the eternal radiance underneath untouched. With such sentiments the aged Meinecke returned, in *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, after forty years of wandering to that 'classical liberalism' or 'objective idealism' which had been at the base of his first important work, *Das Leben des Generalfeldmarschalls Hermann von Boyen* of 1896; except that now the belief in the great harmony of being which in those halcyon days he had fancied to see confirmed by the facts of contemporary history, was no more to him than a metaphysical consolation, a beacon from beyond.

Universal history, so we may sum up Meinecke's opinion after 1933, is tragic, as far as its human content is concerned. But we may and we must look beyond its human content to its higher meaning, and then a ray of light will begin to penetrate our darkness. 'In the physical world it is possible to suffer defeat and annihilation; in the metaphysical world there will none-the-less survive something of eternal import.' Thus pessimism need not be the historian's last word. 'Even in the most horrible chasms of universal history, the presentiment cannot perish that there is a solution—unknowable for us—of this tragic duality, a higher unity of the physical and metaphysical worlds.' [1] Even in his most anxious hour, Meinecke could believe that the message of the supernal powers to us unhappy humans was expressible in the words of Goethe's *Symbolum*: 'We bid you hope.'

IV

In the Meinecke who re-emerged in 1945 from his temporary eclipse and occupied, as Rector of the Free University at West Berlin, a central place in German intellectual life, we see a man cut from his moorings. Neither in politics nor in history are his ideas what they had been only ten years before.

In politics, Meinecke's basic conviction had always been that the state needed power to stretch itself as the individual needed air to breathe, that the pursuit of power was a process without which a state was practically not a state at all. From this opinion he has now taken leave. Considering the past and the future of his country, he comes to the conclusion that Germany will be more happy than she has ever been before, if she will model herself on Sweden and Holland, those two 'burnt-out craters' of one-time great European ambitions.[2] Politics and power politics are no longer identified.

In the field of historical scholarship we see a change of front which

[1] *Aphorismen*, pp. 139 *seq.*

[2] *Die Deutsche Katastrophe*, 1946, p. 162.

is perhaps even more incisive. In a lecture to the German Academy of Sciences, delivered in 1947, Meinecke discussed the question (which at one time would have seemed to him quite foolish), who had more to give to the historian of today, Ranke or Burckhardt, the chief representative of 'objective idealism' or the chief representative of 'subjective idealism', the 'idealism of freedom', within the European tradition of historical thought. Meinecke had, of course, always admired Burckhardt's achievement—who would not? But he had always found his insistence on the wickedness of man antipathetic and his condemnation of power politics incomprehensible. Now he draws near to the great Swiss. 'Burckhardt is today closer to us than Ranke. . . . We have had experience of the nocturnal aspect of universal history to a degree which Ranke did not know and did not even suspect. . . . Burckhardt has peered more deeply and sharply into the historical character of his own age and has, in consequence, been better able to foresee what was to come . . . Like a fine seismograph he felt the worst possibilities [which lay in the modern mass movements]—the rise of the most wicked people to leadership of the masses. . . . The horrible picture of the future which Burckhardt was never tired of sketching in the 'seventies and 'eighties, we have to all intents and purposes lived through it. . . .' [1] And it is not only the anticipation, and anticipatory condemnation, of Hitler which Meinecke praises in Burckhardt, it is also Burckhardt's condemnation of Bismarck and of all Machiavellism in general.

Nevertheless, in spite of this great change in attitude, Meinecke still feels unable to embrace the philosophy for which Burckhardt stood—the conviction that the moral consciousness of man is alien to the world in which it operates and for ever locked in deadly battle with it. Even now he is hankering for the comforting and comfortable belief of Ranke that all is well with the world, that somehow good will come out of evil, as if by a divine chemistry. Unavailingly, he looks for a middle way between Ranke and Burckhardt, between objective idealism and idealism of freedom. In the depth of his heart he knows full well that no compromise is possible between the two positions. But he is hedging. He cannot bring himself to choose.

The same lack of decision also characterizes Meinecke's later attempts to advance philosophically beyond the final point which he had reached in *Die Entstehung des Historismus*. There, his conclusion had been that all phenomena we find in history are emanations from a mysterious ground of being, from a last reality which may be regarded as an *abyssos* of individuality, manifesting itself in ever new forms and shapes. Not unnaturally, he raised the question what that mysterious ground of being was, how the great X of ultimate reality could be resolved. A poet like Goethe could escape this question, a scholar like Meinecke, com-

[1] *Aphorismen*, pp. 148, 147, 145, 150 *seq.*

mitted to clarity of thought, could not. In the essay *Deutung eines Rankewortes* the momentous problem is pondered, but no solution is attained. Helplessly Meinecke admits that he feels himself 'in the middle between Christian belief and unbelief', caught by a mode of thought which can only be described in a self-contradictory phrase such as 'secularized Christianity', and that, in any case, he cannot rid himself of the suspicion that the God of the Christians is 'a mere anthropopathic mirroring of our desires'.[1] We cannot, it is true, escape that suspicion; but neither can we suppress the insistence of our mind that there must be something beyond the veil of appearances to which they are pointing back as a logical conclusion points back to its hidden premisses. Again, he tries to steer in the direction of a compromise. Are the two hostile conceptions—the concept of an immanent deity, dear to objective idealism, and the concept of a transcendent creator, sitting at the heart of the idealism of freedom—really irreconcilable? Meinecke hardly dares to assert that they *can* be reconciled; he only wishes they could. We must be satisfied to 'divine' the existence of a *deion* in the deepest depths of being. We must be content, as Goethe put it in his poem *Pandora*, 'to see what is illumined, not the light'. We must be reconciled to the fact that God is to us only, as Ranke said, 'a holy hieroglyphic'.

For us, who are critical of this defeatist agnosticism, it is difficult to see what else the *deion* of Meinecke can possibly be but the Absolute Spirit of Hegel shorn of its pristine grandeur and omnipotence and pushed one stage further back into the dimness of the unknowable. Certainly it is not He who appeared to the Patriarch in the plains of Mamre; it is not He whom Saint Thomas adored with the words: 'My Lord and my God'; it is not He whom Pascal was privileged to behold on the night of his ecstasy, and who made him break into the cry: 'The God of Abraham! The God of Isaac! The God of Jacob! Not the god of the philosophers and the clever people.' The *deion* of Meinecke is not even the god of the philosophers and rationalists, it is no god at all; it is in fact no more than fog. It shows a curious limitation of Meinecke's mind that he who had not hesitated to regard nations, states, institutions and ideas as individuals, cannot bring himself to conceive of a personal God.

But, it will be said, a professor is after all only a professor. We must not expect to find him a seer or a saint, even if he is indiscreet enough to meddle with the sacred fire. Be it so. But a professor should be above all a realist, and it is as a realist that Meinecke failed all his life. He failed because he never managed, in spite of all his efforts, to free himself completely from the befogging pantheistic dogma which had been the creed of his youth. Of the doctrines of Christianity he rejected not

[1] *Aphorismen*, pp. 119, 127, 121.

only the idea of a personal God, but also the conception—so closely connected with it—of a world fallen into iniquity and in need of redemption. This is where his greatest weakness lay. At no time did he have a clear realization of what evil was and what part it played in history and politics. At first, before 1918, evil was to him no more than a step towards good, a cost item as it were, which, in due course, will pay in terms of profit. Then, between 1918 and 1933, evil was to him essentially a fact of nature which it would be as vain to try and stop as it would be to arrest the movement of the stars or the coming and going of the tides. The presence of evil was certainly perceived in this period, but it was not grasped as something that *men* bring into the world and can, in principle, keep out of it. Finally, after 1933, evil was indeed bemoaned, but at the same time pushed away to the far horizon of that metaphysical haven or heaven in which our philosopher-historian had built the residence for his declining years. Thus at no time of his career did he comprehend that 'history consists, for the greater part', as Burke had classically expressed it, 'of the miseries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal, and all the train of disorderly appetites'.[1] Not to have known these darkest features of the human soul, shows perhaps Meinecke's greatness as a man; it shows also his limitations as a historian. 'The truth shall make you free,' says the Gospel. But no truth can be more important, and none more essential for our liberation from the trammels of intellectual error as well as moral degradation, than the truth concerning ourselves.

[1] *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Everyman ed., p. 137.

INTRODUCTION

THE NATURE OF *RAISON D'ÉTAT*

RAISON D'ÉTAT is the fundamental principle of national conduct, the State's first Law of Motion. It tells the statesman what he must do to preserve the health and strength of the State. The State is an organic structure whose full power can only be maintained by allowing it in some way to continue growing; and *raison d'état* indicates both the path and the goal for such a growth. This path and this goal cannot be chosen quite at random; but neither can exactly the same ones be prescribed for all States. For the State is also an individual structure with its own characteristic way of life; and the laws general to the species are modified by a particular structural pattern and a particular environment. So the 'intelligence' of the State consists in arriving at a proper understanding both of itself and its environment, and afterwards in using this understanding to decide the principles which are to guide its behaviour. These principles are always bound to be at the same time both individual and general, both constant and changeable. They will change subtly as alterations take place in the State itself and in its environment. But they must also tally with what is lasting in the structure of the individual State, as well as with that which is permanent in the laws governing the life of all States. Thus from the realm of what is and what will be, there constantly emerges, through the medium of understanding, a notion of what ought to be and what must be. The statesman *must*, if he is convinced of the accuracy of his understanding of the situation, act in accordance with it in order to reach his goal. The choice of path to the goal is restricted by the particular nature of the State and its environment. Strictly speaking, only *one* path to the goal (i.e. the best possible one at the moment) has to be considered at any one time. For each State at each particular moment there exists one ideal course of action, one ideal *raison d'état*. The statesman in power tries hard to discern this course, and so too does the historian surveying the past in retrospect. Any historical evaluations of national conduct are simply attempts to discover the true *raison d'état* of the States in question.

Only so long as the statesman is uncertain which is the true *raison d'état* is it possible for him to choose. But too often such a choice is out of the question, and the statesman is forced to enter on one single narrowly defined path. *Raison d'état* thus takes on the profound and serious character of national necessity. The characteristic way of life of the individual State must therefore develop within an iron chain of cause and effect. To live a free and independent life can, for the State, have no other meaning than to follow those precepts which are dictated to it by its own *raison d'état*.

That which is and that which ought to be, Causality and Idea, Freedom and Necessity, the general and the individual—we are now in the midst of those problems which so violently agitate modern philosophy. But the historian wishes to attain a clear overall view. It is to philosophers that he must leave the task of thoroughly investigating the logical and metaphysical questions arising out of his problems. He can say no more on the subject than the following.

There is no doubt that, in all behaviour prompted by *raison d'état*, there does exist an absolutely firm and unbroken causal nexus, which is quite as plain and evident as anything else in the historical field. Powerful motives of self-preservation and the growth of the State drive the statesman on to actions which bear at the same time both an individual and a general character. These actions are individual in so far as they strive to reach their goal by a path which is completely unique; it is adapted to the needs of the moment, and is a path that will never be trodden again. In doing so at times they directly infringe the valid universal moral decrees and the positive law. On the other hand the actions bear a general character in that they spring from a natural impulse which is permanent and common to all States. So the individual element in actions prompted by *raison d'état* appears as the necessary outcome of a general principle; necessary, because the copious diversity of historical existence, and in particular the insecurity of a State struggling for its life among other States equally insecure, force the general impulse to undergo the most subtle modification and individualization. Thus we see that both the individual and the general elements in all action prompted by *raison d'état* can easily be fitted into the general causal nexus of events.

But every action prompted by *raison d'état* constitutes a causalconnection in itself; and this causal connection is at the same time one both of purpose and of ultimate value, a teleological connection. The statesman wishes to realize certain pre-determined aims and values. Of what nature are these? Whence do they spring? As one tries to analyse them and trace their derivation, the first difficulties appear. The well-being of the State and of its population is held to be the ultimate value and the goal; and power, maintenance of power, extension of power, is the

indispensable means which must—without any qualification—be procured. Without qualification, in so far as it must even be procured if necessary at the expense of a complete disregard for moral and positive law (this is so at least in the opinion of many, and judging from widespread and habitual practice). But this at once gives rise to doubts as to how far such a disregard may be carried, and opinions and attitudes on the subject have been and continue to be very varied. The proposition that the power which is necessary to the State is to be procured without qualification—that is to say, *by any means*—is maintained by some and contested by others. In addition, certain moral judgments arise here to complicate the simple causally unbroken picture of action prompted by *raison d'état* which we had in the first place.

Besides the ultimate value represented by the well-being of the State, there are still other outstanding values which lay an equal claim to be considered as unconditional. Of these we are concerned here with the moral law and with the idea of justice. For it is the case that this very well-being of the State is secured not solely through power, but also through ethics and justice; and in the last resort the disruption of these can endanger the maintenance of power itself. So it can be seen that a respect for morality and justice in themselves (a purely idealistic consideration) is not the sole motive which could induce a statesman to limit his striving for power and restrict his choice of means to obtain it. For a similar limitation would be necessary if he were acting out of a thoroughly understood regard for the well-being of the State—a complex motive in which idealistic considerations might be mingled with practical and utilitarian ones. If he acts out of consideration for the well-being of the State—that is to say, from *raison d'état*—then there at once arises the very obscure question of how far he is guided in doing so by a utilitarian and how far by an idealistic point of view. Where then is the boundary between the two? From a purely logical point of view, it might perhaps be considered possible to define such a boundary. But in history as we know it, the line cannot be sharply drawn. It is not in this instance possible to understand the ultimate depths of personal action. As a result the historian can do no more than express an opinion as to the supremacy of one or other motive—an opinion which will be more or less probable according to the state of the evidence and according to what other knowledge we have concerning the character of the personality whose actions are in question. And if, after similar acts where idealistic and utilitarian motives might have been operating jointly, anyone were to put the question to himself sincerely as to how far his conduct had been determined by one or other motive, he would in the majority of cases be forced to admit that he was no longer able to distinguish clearly between the two types of motive, and that they had intermingled imperceptibly. It is often the case that moral impulses

do not make their appearance until after a dispassionate examination has revealed the usefulness and effectiveness of ethical action. It is true to say then that the idealistic motive springs from the soil of the utilitarian motive. Moreover this is a process which one can experience oneself, or discern sympathetically and understand intuitively in others, but which one cannot dissect with precision. Between those sensations and motives which are moral in character, and those which are amoral, there too often lie obscure regions of blending and transition; and it can even happen that these obscure regions come to occupy the entire space.

Hitherto we have considered the case where idealistic and utilitarian motives coincide to prevent the statesman from overstepping the bounds of justice and ethics, and to restrict his striving for power. But how does it stand when the situation is reversed? When on the contrary he sets the goal of power above justice and ethics in all his decisions and actions, and so quite specifically and unambiguously acts according to *raison d'état*. Precisely the same obscure problems present themselves, the same unfathomable transitional zones appear once more in feeling, wishing, thinking and acting. Is he then really impelled only by the welfare of the State, disclosing itself as a moral value? By a sore anxiety regarding the existence, the future and the environment of the State entrusted to his care? Is there no more here than a conflict between divergent moral duties? Or do we also perceive the intrusion of some amoral motives? The striving for power is an aboriginal human impulse, perhaps even an animal impulse, which blindly snatches at everything around until it comes up against some external barriers. And, in the case of men at least, the impulse is not restricted solely to what is directly necessary for life and health. Man takes a wholehearted pleasure in power itself and, through it, in himself and his heightened personality.[1] Next to hunter and love, pleonexia is the most powerful elemental and influential impulse in Man. Moreover it was this impulse which, going beyond the mere satisfaction of bare physical needs, awakened the human species to historical life. For without the crude grasping for power of the earlier despots and ruling castes, with all the attendant horror and frightfulness, the stage would never have been reached where States were founded and men were educated to the point of great tasks to be undertaken in common. Neither, of course, could that stage ever have been reached by means of these power-struggles alone; for it was also necessary that some sort of value-concepts (however crude and primitive) of an intellectual and moral type should contribute to these achievements.[2] Kratos and Ethos together build the State and fashion history. But how obscure and problematic the relation between them

[1] Cf. Vierkandt, *Gesellschaftslehre*, p. 290.

[2] The investigation carried out hitherto on Positivist lines has not shown any complete understanding of this. Cf. Vierkandt, *Das Heilige in den primitiven Reli-*

is at each stage of development, and especially in the conduct of the statesman. It may once more be asked: how far is this conduct dominated by the naked impulse to power, by the pleasure of ruling, by ambition? And how far is the power impulse restricted by an ethical consideration for the well-being of the collective Whole entrusted to his care? Only summary answers, based on intuition and a feeling for life, can be given at this stage.

Between Kratos and Ethos, between behaviour prompted by the power-impulse and behaviour prompted by moral responsibility, there exists at the summit of the State a bridge, namely *raison d'état*: the consideration of what is expedient, useful and beneficial, of what the State must do in order to reach occasionally the highest point of its existence. Therein lies the enormous significance (and this significance is not only historical, but also philosophical) of the problem of *raison d'état*, which has not by a long way been properly assessed. For it is precisely on this bridge that one sees particularly clearly the frightful and deeply disturbing difficulties, which are concealed by the juxtaposition of what is and what ought to be, of Causality and the Ideal, of Nature and Mind in human life. *Raison d'état* is a principle of conduct of the highest duplicity and duality; it presents one aspect to physical nature and another to reason. And it also has (if one may so express it) a middle aspect, in which what pertains to nature mingles with what pertains to the mind.

That part of action prompted by *raison d'état* which willingly obeys the power-impulse belongs to the realm of nature. One does this, one must do it, because there is in operation here an elemental force which can never be completely stifled, and without which moreover (as we already noticed) States would never have arisen. And the statesman who must instinctively feel the necessity of power for the State, is also at the same time a man of flesh and blood; there must therefore exist in him a quite personal impulse to power, for without such a contribution of personal pheonexia on the part of strong-willed men with nerves of steel the State could never succeed in acquiring the power that is indispensable to it. All of this still lies within the sphere of causal and biological connections. Most of all, perhaps, it is in this sphere that one finds those direct motives to action, which arise out of the environment of the State and which really do call forth what one terms 'Necessity of State'. This is a situation of constraint in which the State finds itself, in the face of threats either from within or without, and which forces it to adopt defensive and offensive means of a quite specific kind. Today one usually says in such cases that its behaviour is

gionen, Dioskuren, vol. I, which breaks new ground in the sphere of religion here, and proves the existence of a real religious sense amongst peoples in the state of nature.

'constrained'. A high degree of causal necessity, which the agent himself is accustomed to conceive as absolute and inescapable, and to feel most profoundly, is therefore part of the very essence of all action prompted by *raison d'état*.

But this causal process is always (as we remarked) also a process determined by purposes; that is to say, it is at the same time also a teleological process. The world of values becomes brighter, and that of the elemental powers retreats into the shadows, as we turn our attention to this aspect of *raison d'état*. When it rises to its highest possible form, that is the time when power is no longer sought for its own sake alone. Rather, it is striven for solely as a means for attaining the common weal—the physical, moral and spiritual health of the community. A high moral goal—but at the same time the means towards it is still, and must always remain, crude and elemental. It is, from a Christian point of view, a surrender to sin, and is only too readily exposed to misuse. But, all the same, if a statesman feels himself obliged by 'necessity of State' to violate law and ethics, he can still feel himself morally justified at the bar of his own conscience, if in doing so he has, according to his own personal conviction, thought first of the good of the State entrusted to his care. Thus the realm of values is capable of shedding an ennobling light far into the inmost recesses of problematical conduct. But nevertheless such conduct still remains problematical and dualistic, because the conscious infringement of morality and law must in any circumstances (whatever motives may have prompted it) be a moral stain, a defeat of Ethos in its partnership with Kratos. Thus all conduct prompted by *raison d'état* fluctuates continuously back and forth between light and dark.

And all the more so it is true that the middle section of this path is dominated equally by light and darkness. For *raison d'état* demands first and foremost a high degree of rationality and expediency in political conduct. It demands of the statesman that he should educate and form himself culturally for it, that he should rule himself strictly, that he should suppress his emotions and his personal inclinations and aversions, and completely lose himself in the practical task of securing the common good. He should also seek, quite coolly and rationally, to ascertain the practical interests of the State, and to separate these from any emotional overtones—for hatred and revenge, as Bismarck says, are bad counsellors in politics. Thus far *raison d'état* calls for a determined ascent from the physical to the intellectual, and also demands the specifically moral accomplishment of altruistic self-sacrifice in the service of a higher task. But the elimination of emotional motives can never be completely successful for the very reason that (as we already noted) an elemental power-impulse must already be present in the statesman himself, because without it he would

not do his job properly. It is easy to demand of him that he should only allow it to actuate him to the extent required by the practical needs of the State. But again, how is it possible, in individual concrete cases, to distinguish sharply from a logical and practical point of view between what amount of power is, and what is not, indispensable for the statesman and the State? How difficult—often indeed how impossible it is, in the case of territorial annexation by a victor, to separate a pressing necessity of *Realpolitik*, from the pure pleasure of aggrandizement. In the terrible harshness shown by Richelieu towards his opponents at home, or by Bismarck towards Harry von Arnim, it is scarcely possible to distinguish clearly between a bitter necessity of State and personal motives of revenge and rivalry. Once again, there appears here that obscure twilight zone between impulse and reason, between the animal and the intellectual in behaviour prompted by *raison d'état*; this zone can never be brought into the clear light of day, either by theoretical analysis or by practical application. And that, which we characterize here as the 'intelligence' of the State, is not by any means identical with that superior concept of intelligence (extending into the realms of ethics), which philosophy generally has in view when dissecting the various forces of inner life. Certainly 'intelligence' can rise to this height and even acquire ethical content, if it embraces the spiritual and moral good of the community. But that is not possible either without the addition of new motives, of warm and deep stirrings of emotional feeling, of inner ardour. Warmth and coldness then must mingle in the spirit of the agent in a highly special sense; for *raison d'état* demands (as we have seen) an ice-cold temperature. At the level of development which *raison d'état* reached in the great statesmen of world history, it was capable of achieving just this degree of extraordinary tension and union of intellectual and emotional forces. But it has a natural tendency to retreat into its own most essential element of ice-coldness, to restrict itself to whatever bare egotistical advantages can be attained for the State and to make its calculations with reference to these alone. And the advantage of the State is always at the same time blended too with the advantage of the rulers. So *raison d'état* is continually in danger of becoming a merely utilitarian instrument without ethical application,[1] in danger of sinking back again from wisdom to mere cunning, and of restraining the superficial passions merely in order to satisfy passions and egoisms which lie deeper and are more completely hidden. It can become a mere technique of statecraft, and (historically speaking) that is what it originally was. But mere technique belongs to the realm of physical nature. It is shared by ants, bees and nesting birds.

Our investigation resembles a stroll in the engulfing maze of a garden

[1] 'For politics Man is a means, in the most favourable instances a means towards his own salvation.' Spranger, *Lebensformen*, 2nd ed., p. 192.

which continually leads back to the same point. This will happen to us once again when, turning our gaze towards the entrance in one more fresh attempt, we try to grasp the problem.

Does the mind break out of physical nature in one bound as an essentially different force; or does nature itself develop by imperceptible transitions and an inward continuity into that which we call mind? Must we conceive the world as dualistic or as monistic? This problem is a sore one for modern philosophical thought, which is so much more saturated with experience of life and history, than was the older philosophy which tended rather to construct and postulate in terms of thought. For the two chief weapons possessed by modern philosophical thought—the processes of logical conception and empirical induction—come in the last resort into opposition with one another; because the findings of pure logic are made doubtful by experience, and those of plain empiricism are made doubtful by logical and epistemological considerations. But the historian—or one at least who feels that his responsibility does not end with merely describing events and establishing causal links—is continually being drawn into the whirlpool of this problem. He cannot content himself with the answers offered by philosophers; for in each of these (even the ones that seem to him most reasonable) he discerns some weak point or other, some unknown quantity which remains unsolved or only apparently solved. Nor is he capable of penetrating far enough by the light of his own reason. The drills used by philosophy and history drive well enough through the softer strata, but they splinter on the bedrock of actual things. The most a historian can do is to take the particular processes of the historical world which he is supposed to elucidate, and let these events be seen in the light of higher and more general forces which are present behind and develop in these events; his task is to show the concrete *sub specie aeterni*. But he is not in a position to determine the essence of this higher and eternal force itself, or to determine the relationship it bears to concrete reality. Thus he can only say that in historical life he beholds a world which, though unified, is bipolar: a world which needs both poles to be as it appears to us. Physical nature and intellect, causality according to law and creative spontaneity, are these two poles, which stand in such sharp and apparently irreconcilable opposition. But historical life, as it unfolds between them, is always influenced simultaneously by both, even if not always by both to the same degree. The historian's task would be an easy one if he could content himself with this straightforward dualistic interpretation of the relationship between physical nature and intellect, as it corresponds to the Christian and ethical tradition of earlier centuries. Then he would have nothing more to do than describe the struggle between light and darkness, between sin and forgiveness, between the world of intellect and that of

the senses. He would be a war-correspondent; and taking up his position (naturally enough) in the intellectual camp he would be able to distinguish friend from foe with certainty. History generally used to be written in this way, and the same method is still widely practised. The writing of all moralizing and prejudiced history belongs in this class; only it should be observed that the direction of bias, and the opinions as to what constitutes intellect and light, tend to alter. But the truly scholarly writing of history has outgrown this crude dualism—though it has not outgrown dualism altogether, since the polarity of physical nature and intellect forces itself upon one irresistibly. At the same time one is obliged to accept the uncomfortable fact—deeply disturbing though it is, and often shocking—that physical nature and intellect are not even so easy to distinguish apart as friend and foe in war, but on the contrary are frequently found grown together and entwined. It is precisely those middle zones lying in the twilight between the elemental and the ideal, which disturb the profound meditations of the historian, and continually present him with the question whether he is to conceive his world as dualistic or monistic.[1] But in any case it is his task to seize hold of any visible threads and links between the elemental and the ideal.

The singularity and at the same time the incomprehensibility of this bipolarity begins at that very point where, out of the ordinary mechanical connection of cause and effect, there bursts forth a self-contained living unity, an entelechy or (as the historian would describe it with reference to his province) a historical individuality: an individuality within which a spontaneously dominating idea marshals the parts together into a whole and, by making use of the causal nexus and more and more coming to dominate it, strives to realize itself. But the causal nexus will never allow itself to be completely dominated by the idea; it proves recalcitrant, it enters into all the tissues and veins of the organism which without it would not even be possible, but which through it alone would also not be possible, or at least would not be intelligible to us. We must leave on one side the difficult and obscure question of how the organic forms and entelechies of nature are related to those of history, because we are here concerned with the most important and vital of these historical forms—namely, the State. *Raison d'état* is its vital principle, its entelechy. Let us follow once more the course of its development, as it emerges from darkness into the light.

Its origin can be traced back to two sources: firstly, to the personal power-drive of the rulers, and secondly to the need of the subject

[1] One comes across this problem today in the most unexpected quarters. On the subject of Simmel, cf. for example, Troeltsch, *Der Historismus und seine Probleme*, I, 590; and in general, Vierkandt, *Der Dualismus im modernen Weltbild*, 1923.

people, which allows itself to be governed because it receives some compensations in return, and which through the medium of its own latent impulses towards power and life also nourishes the similar impulses on the part of the rulers. Ruler and ruled are thus both clasped together in a common bond, by the aboriginal human need for community. It is an essential characteristic of power which has once been won over a whole people, that if it is to be retained it must be exercised. Therefore, since it has come into existence, it must be organized. And once it has been organized, it becomes transformed into an independent entity of importance, a super-individual Something; it must be cared for, it must be served, and first and foremost it must be served by him who sought it and strove for it. The ruler is transformed into the servant of his own power. The aims of power itself begin to restrict personal caprice; the hour has struck, and *raison d'état* is born.

It has been justly pointed out in this connection [1] that, although it is in the essence of power to rule blindly, yet nevertheless the blind and unregulated rule of power in real life is a very exceptional occurrence. Power which gushes out blindly will end by destroying itself; it must follow certain purposive rules and standards, in order to preserve itself and to grow. Cunning and force must therefore unite in the exercise of power. Thus is formed that utilitarian middle-ground in the essence of *raison d'état* which we have already described, always being continually threatened and inveigled by the natural blindness and boundlessness of the elemental power-impulse, yet continually being united together by an imperative insight into that path of conduct which the moment discloses to be the most effective—through a conviction of that 'necessity of State' which says to the ruler: 'Thus *must* you act, if you wish to preserve the power of the State whose care is in your hands; and you *may* act thus, because no other means exists which would lead to that end.' In such a way there comes into existence a supra-personal entelechy, which leads the ruler on beyond himself, but which at the same time is always nourished and approved by the personal impulse and interests of the ruler himself.

This can already be seen clearly in the relation between ruler and subjects. There is formed at once a community of interest between the two, which above all contributes towards bridling the power-drive of the ruler. For he must also serve the interests of the subjects in some way, because the existence of the whole power-system depends on them; a satisfied people, willing and able to fulfil the demands made on it, is a source of power. But he is only able to serve them (and generally speaking only does serve them) in so far as the system of government allows it—not to mention his own position as ruler, his own personal power-interests. *Raison d'état* forces the power-impulse to satisfy more

[1] Vierkandt, *Machtverhältnis und Machtmoral*, 1916, p. 8.

general needs, but the power-impulse forces this satisfaction back again within definite frontiers.

Once it has come into existence, this supra-personal entelechy is of extraordinary significance, leading on further and further towards higher values. Now one is serving some higher entity which rises far above individual life, one is no longer serving only oneself—that is the decisive point, where the crystallization into nobler forms begins, where what was formerly no more than necessary and useful now begins to be felt also as beautiful and good. Until finally the State stands out as a moral institution for the provision of the highest qualities of life—until finally the impulsive will-to-power and to-life on the part of a nation is transformed into that morally conscious national mode of thought, which sees in the nation a symbol of an eternal value. Thus by imperceptible changes the *raison d'état* of the rulers becomes ennobled and forms a connecting-link between Kratos and Ethos. The historian who traces these changes, this metamorphosis of natural impulses into ideas, and really tries to feel what they mean (how few of us, indeed, ever do this) will over and over again be seized with wonder at the dark riddles of life, and will be plunged into extraordinary perplexing moods of bewilderment. He will feel a kind of giddiness and grope for a railing on the path. Here, if anywhere, he is in need of some sure guidance of his own. Shall he content himself with the rough and ready answer of Positivism, which explains these changes as a constantly-improving and better-suited adaptation to the goal of self-preservation, and considers intellectual and moral systems to be nothing more than a superstructure of convenience? That which is merely useful and necessary can never lead beyond the static technique of animals and animal communities. Beauty and goodness can never be derived from what is merely useful; they spring from the independent abilities of man, from the spontaneous tendency towards introducing an element of mind into physical nature and towards introducing an ethical element into bare utility. From a causal point of view it may in its development seem closely connected, even quite inseparably connected, with the lower impulses and abilities of man—yet, when viewed in terms of an inward feeling for life (a sense which can probe more deeply into these things than Positivism can, being equipped only for blunt observation of causal connections) it sets itself up quite apart from these lower impulses and is seen as something unique and aboriginal. And the very fact that higher and lower abilities, the element of mind and the element of physical nature, can be in Man at one and the same time both causally connected and yet essentially separate, is indeed part of the dark mystery of life.

But it is always towards this belief in some higher power, which demands both human service and sacrifice, that the intellectual and moral elements in Man are constantly straining upward. The history of the

idea of *raison d'état* will make this clear. But such a history will do more —it will at the same time have to show the eternal bondage of Man to physical nature, the ever-recurring lapse of *raison d'état* back into the basic elemental powers.

This polarity of physical nature and intellect is shown very clearly in many forms of human creativity; and what one sees in them as 'culture', is really in danger every moment of sinking back into the element of physical nature, into the 'Kingdom of Evil'. But the State differs (and the difference is not in its favour) from all other cultural organizations, in that these lapses into physical nature are not merely the result of physical weakness on the part of the men who compose such an organization, but are on the contrary caused by the very structure and vital needs of the organization itself. The constitution of every other legal community and association, from the Church itself down to the usual kind of club, depends ultimately on a claim for the absolute validity of ideal standards. If these are impaired, then the members are offending against the spirit of the institution; yet that spirit itself remains completely unharmed and spotlessly pure. But it is in fact an essential part of the spirit of *raison d'état* that it must always be smearing itself by offending against ethics and law; if in no other way, then only by the very fact of war—a means which is apparently so indispensable to it, and which (despite all the legal forms in which it is dressed up) does signalize the breaking down of cultural standards and a re-establishing of the state of nature. It is apparently the case that the State must do evil. Certainly, moral feeling has rebelled against this anomaly time and time again—but without any historical consequence. It is the most frightful and staggering fact of world history, that there is no hope of making radically moral the human community itself which encloses and comprehends all other communities; yet it contains the richest and most manifold culture, and therefore really ought to be a guiding-light to all other communities by the purity of its essence.

For the majority of men this state of affairs is bearable because custom has blinded them to it, and because they have a more or less distinct feeling that at this point they are perhaps face to face with certain insurmountable human limits. But it is not permissible for a historian, any more than for a philosopher or a theologian, to be content to accept this situation with a shrug of the shoulder. History, indeed, cannot assist culture, for it does not set up positive standards and ideals of conduct. Rather it pursues exclusively the ideal of pure contemplation, and truth as an ultimate value. It would endanger this pursuit, and would sink down to the level of mere prejudiced history, if it also tried to serve the Good and the Beautiful directly. But in an indirect fashion it does serve them, because all the intellectual and spiritual life-values support each other. And they work for each other all the more

deeply and fruitfully in that each strives, simply and unswervingly, only to realize itself. The historical assessment of the problem of *raison d'état*, which we are attempting, has therefore got to forgo any intention of moralizing. If one can succeed in doing this, there will be no lack of resulting effects of a moral kind.

It is worth while then to try once again (only now more obviously so than before) and see clearly why it is that the State—although it is the very guardian of law, and although it is just as dependent as any other kind of community on an absolute validity of ethics and law, is yet unable to abide by these in its own behaviour. Power belongs to the essence of the State; without it the State cannot carry out its task of upholding justice and protecting the community. All the other communities need its power, in order to develop without hindrance, and in order to keep under control the bestial element in Man. Only the State possesses this power in a full degree which embraces both physical and spiritual means. All other communities, although dependent on the use of power, are nevertheless not required to have their own physical power, and are thus freer from the temptations of power. Power is not indeed 'evil in itself', as Schlosser and Burckhardt thought; on the contrary it is naturally indifferent both towards good and evil. But whoever holds power in his hands is continuously subject to a moral temptation to misuse it, and to overstep the boundaries of justice and morality. We saw this clearly enough when we analysed action prompted by *raison d'état*. One can describe it as a curse that lies on power—it cannot be withstood. Thus for the very reason that the State needs more elemental and natural power-means than any other community, the State also finds it more fundamentally difficult to keep these power-means moral.

But this radical moralization of the other communities does not in any way signify that their practice is spotlessly pure, but solely that their norms and principles of conduct are pure. Why cannot the State, too, achieve at least this purity of its standards and laws of movement? Why is there not at least a pure theory of State life, even if the practice has to remain impure? Time and again the attempt has been made to set up just such a pure theory, which would bring the State consistently within the rule of the law of morality and the command of justice; but, as has already been remarked, this was never historically successful. Whoever attempts to derive the theory of State conduct from the historical essence of the State (something which must certainly happen of necessity) is always bound to come up against that stumbling-block in action prompted by *raison d'état*, where apparently some pressure of obligation carries the State beyond justice and morality. It lies in the State's action towards the outside, not towards the inside. Within the State it is possible for *raison d'état* to remain in harmony with justice and morality, because no other power hinders that of the State. This

was not always so; it is only a result of historical development. So long as the State authority did not hold all the domestic means of physical power concentrated in its own hand, so long as it still had to struggle in domestic affairs with rival or opposing power, then it was always being tempted (indeed, in its own view it was frequently obliged) to combat these forces by unjust and immoral means. And even today every revolution which it has to repress still renews the temptation, with just this difference: that a finer moral feeling is working against it, and the form of exceptional legislation makes it possible to legalize the unusual power-means which the State, in such situations, requires. But in any case it is also in the essential interest of the State that it should obey the law which it itself promulgates, and thus foster civil morality in domestic affairs by its own example. It is thus possible for morality, justice and power to work together in harmony with each other within the State.

Yet they are not capable of doing this in their relationship to other States. Justice can only be upheld, if a power exists which is able and ready to uphold it. Otherwise the natural situation arises, where each tries to fight for the right he believes in, with whatever power-means he has at his disposal. States (says Hegel) are not subject to any Praetor, who could give just decisions and uphold them by might. Nor would he know which set of laws he ought to be guided by in his decisions; for the mutually conflicting vital interests of the States generally take advantage of the disorder that exists amongst the recognized legal principles. This makes it possible for the States to pour out all kinds of elemental power against one another, and gives free play to all the moral temptations of the power-impulse. But in this situation *raison d'état* now exhibits once again its inner duplicity and duality, for it also fears these elemental forces which it unleashes. Freely-released power shall (when *raison d'état* is properly exercised) really only constitute the means of implementing by force those vital necessities of the State, which are not to be secured by legal methods. But this means, once freed from legal fetters, threatens to set itself up as an end-in-itself, and to carry the State beyond that frontier of which it stands in real need. Then the excesses of power politics set in; the irrational outruns the rational. That mere technical utility, which (as we observed) forms as it were the kernel of *raison d'état*, does not indeed always possess enough strength to hem in effectively the elemental impulses of force. But perhaps it always does have more strength for this purpose than the ethical ideas have, which grow up around *raison d'état*, when it reaches its highest form. Motives of utility and morality, working together in the life of States, have not in any case been able to produce hitherto more than the precarious pattern of International Law, and the modern League of Nations which is at least equally precarious. And despite

International Law and the League of Nations we continue, up to the present minute, to observe excesses of power politics on the part of those States who do not have to fear any Forum or any more powerful adversary.

It is certainly also true that, in the course of centuries, further changes have taken place in the nature and character of power politics—changes which can be traced back (though not perhaps exclusively) to the influence of moral ideas. But it may well be asked whether it is not the case that everything that has been accomplished in the way of ennobling and humanizing power politics (and its most important instrument—war) is compensated for by other fateful effects of civilization, that is to say, of the progressive rationalization and technicalization of life. The answer to this question belongs—as does everything which can only be stated after an elucidation of the developmental process of the idea of *raison d'état*—to the close of our treatise.

But now we must certainly look more closely at that constraining force which, in the corporate life of States together, carries *raison d'état* beyond the bounds of law and morality. The State (we have said) must create for itself its own imaginary right and necessity for existence, because no other authority can create this on its behalf; and because there does not exist any directive and arbitrative State-authority over all States. But why is it not possible then for the properly-understood interest of the States themselves, co-operating by reason of ethical motives, to induce them to unite and freely restrict the methods of their power politics, to abide by Law and Morality, and to develop the institutions of International Law and the League of Nations to a full and satisfactory efficiency? Because no one of them will trust another round the corner. Because no one of them believes for certain about any of the others, that it would abide by the agreed limitations in absolutely every instance and without any exception; but on the contrary suspects that in certain instances that other would once again lapse into following his own natural egoism. The first lapse back into evil ways on the part of one State (out of anxiety for its own welfare) and attended by success, would be sufficient to shatter the whole undertaking once again, and destroy the credit of ethical policy. Even if one wished to conduct the foreign policy of one's own State by methods which were not ethically objectionable, one would nevertheless always have to be on one's guard in case one's opponent failed to do so too; and in such a case (according to the principle *à corsaire corsaire et demi*) one would feel oneself released from the moral imperative—whereupon the old, age-old game would then start again from the beginning.

Thus what makes any reform apparently impossible is the profound and pessimistic conviction (rooted in the instincts, and borne out by historical experience) to the effect that it is not possible to improve the

character of State activity. The Idealist will always be repeating his demand for such a reform, and will always be declaring it to be possible. The responsible and executive statesman (even if fundamentally an Idealist himself) will always find himself constrained by the pressure of the responsibility he bears for the whole, to doubt the possibility of it, and to take up a line of conduct that is in accordance with this doubt. Once again we recognize that this 'necessity of State', which strips away the fetters of justice and morality, simultaneously possesses an ethical and an elemental aspect; and that the State is an amphibious creature, which simultaneously inhabits the ethical and the natural worlds. In like manner, every man and every human association is an amphibian of this kind. But they are subject to the constraining force of the State, which exacts retribution for every misuse of natural impulses—at least in so far as such a misuse offends against the laws. Nevertheless the State itself is now once more under an obligation, whereby it must both use and misuse a natural impulse in one and the same breath.

* * *

We have attempted to present the baffling nature of *raison d'état* in just such a manner as it appears to a present-day view. If our view is correct, then we have before us here an idea which, although it is itself to a great extent placed beyond the reach of historical change, yet nevertheless does contribute to all historical changes in a highly important manner—a timeless attendant and leader of all States created by human hands . . . a spark which takes hold on every newly-arisen State, and which, even inside the same State, if owing to a revolution a change takes place in the person and type of ruler, springs over from the old to the new rulers. In some way or other, government everywhere is carried on in accordance with *raison d'état*; and therefore one also meets the problems and contradictions which occur in conduct prompted by *raison d'état*. The content of this action changes; but the form, i.e. the law governing this action, remains the same and repeats itself everlastingly. And since *raison d'état* contains within itself both a naturalistic factor and a value factor, thus it is also possible for the relationship between the two factors to change continuously, and now one factor and now the other is dominant.

But (the historical sense is bound to ask) is this no more than a continual movement to and fro? Or do any organic developments take place here? How far is statecraft timeless, in general, and how far is it changeable and capable of development? We consider that this question (which has never yet to our knowledge been posed) is a very fruitful one, but also a very difficult one to answer, if one is looking for a universal and all-embracing answer straightaway. But it is capable of

performing very valuable services indeed, if it is employed as a heuristic means, in order to distinguish (in the national development of separate cultural communities) the element which is general and ever-recurring from that which is individual and unique.

And now there at once emerges a definite and altogether important relationship between the timeless kernel of statecraft and *raison d'état*, and their historically changeable operations. National egoism, the impulse to power and towards self-preservation, that is to say State-interest, is timeless and general; whereas the concrete State-*interests*, which come to belong to a State on account of its special structure and its situation among other States, these are changeable, unique and individual. Amongst these latter, moreover, there are some of greater and some of lesser changeability. Certain of them are knit together so closely with the character of a certain nation and its geographical situation, that they must be accepted as likely to hold constant for as long as that nation continues to occupy that spot on the earth's surface. This holds good, for instance, of the struggle for the Rhine Frontier, which has been carried on between Gauls and Germans from the time of Caesar right up to the present day. It is occasionally possible for other interests, determined by geographical situation and the character of a people, to become effective only when called forth by certain internal and external alterations, as for instance the interest shown by the English Nation in ruling the seas, an interest which still lay dormant during the Middle Ages, and the world-economic expansion of the German Nation after 1871. Again there are other interests that seem to proceed exclusively from the geographical situation, and for this reason attach themselves to whatever nations and States follow one another in ruling over the same regions. Thus, from time immemorial, a rivalry for the rule of the Adriatic Sea has continually arisen between those States which dominate the Northern, Eastern and Western shores of that Sea; and the Jugo-Slav State has stepped into the shoes of Austria-Hungary and the Hapsburgs, who used to menace the Republic of Venice.

Then, in addition to these basic interests and tendencies of the States, which take effect over the course of centuries and are more or less coercive, there are also others that are subject to sudden change and to continuous alteration, like balls of quicksilver, which in one situation run apart, and in another situation fuse together again. Whenever those more constant basic interests are not at work, then friendships and enmities between States do not generally tend to be of an absolute and unconditional type. For instance, how far may one go in weakening an opponent (whom one is struggling with for the sake of a definite power-aim) without having to fear lest an ally (who is assisting one in the struggle) may become too powerful on account of the destruction

of the enemy, and may change from a friend into a rival? Thus, between actual enemies, there frequently exist at the moment of extreme tension secret bonds of interest, which (like hidden springs) combine to influence the composite interplay of forces. It is these bonds of interest, in the first place, that (co-operating with the intellectual power of a culture and a religion sprung from similar roots) constitute a community-life of the Western peoples; this communal existence is, however, quite different in type from every other community, because in this the egoism of the separate members is always stronger than the idea of community, for the reason that friendship and enmity between the partners is always intersecting and coalescing. But nevertheless this Western communal existence is robust enough to secure for all the members certain common basic interests, which thereupon become alloyed and amalgamated once again in the most labile and manifold way with their own individual egotistical interests. The ceaseless up-and-down movement of the scales, in the storm of events, gives rise principally to a common wish for greater peace and stability in the power-relations—for a 'balance of power' within the Western community of States, knit together as it is by friendship and enmity. Such an ideal of a 'balance of power' is commonly accepted with great ardour; but each State interprets it egotistically, in the sense of a breathing-space and possibility of growth for itself. So it happens that even this balance of power is scarcely achieved, before it begins once more to collapse.

> Ever undone, yet ever restored is the spinning creation,
> And a calm Law controls the transformations' play.

This law, which interweaves together the feelings of community and egoism, war and peace, death and life, dissonance and harmony, cannot altogether be plumbed in respect of its final metaphysical depths, but in respect of its foreground it bears the traits of *raison d'état*. And it is only in the shaping and conscious fostering of all these singular, fluid, and yet at the same time constant power-interests, that the *raison d'état* of the individual State really reaches its full stature, its complete individualization. Thereby it impresses on the State itself its individual stamp. Individuality is formed by this process, by which a definite inner vital law attracts or repels certain parts of the external world, and amalgamates into a singular unity the parts that are attracted. From the very core of *raison d'état* individual States are formed. The doctrine of *raison d'état* thus constitutes a perfectly basic and essential fund of knowledge for all history and statecraft in general.

Hitherto modern historical knowledge has made fuller use of it than statecraft has done; for the latter is still influenced in many ways by the old absolutist methods which incline it to seek for the best, the ideal and normal State, instead of the concrete and individual one. It is the

essence and the principal task of modern Historicism to grasp the individual pattern of historical humanity, but yet at the same time to apprehend its timeless core, the general element in its vital laws, the universal element present in its connections. This now brings into prominence an important connection between the idea of *raison d'état* and modern Historicism. Namely, that action prompted by *raison d'état* has helped to prepare the way for modern Historicism. At a time when thought about the State was still approaching the subject from the point of view of the ideal (of the Best State) set up by Natural Law, action prompted by *raison d'état* was to a certain extent already showing men how to pursue practical history. Whilst thought about the State was still judging the different individual forms in which the State appeared according to standards valid for all time (and consequently in the last resort being guided by this very question of what was the best form of the State), the executive statesman on the other hand was not bothering himself in the slightest about what was the best form of the State, but only concerned himself with those States that were actually in existence at the moment. He was forced to assume that the very same law of *raison d'état* which governed his own conduct also governed the conduct of his neighbours and rivals, subject only to the modification and individualization introduced by the special relations of their State. Consequently, if statecraft was to make progress, it must be his continual endeavour to ascertain these latter modifications, in order to find out the laws guiding the movements of that particular State. Thus action in accordance with *raison d'état* developed relatively early into a form of reconnoitring and judgment, which was already closely related to modern historical judgment. But modern historical judgment also profited therefore from *raison d'état*, from its penetration into the doctrine of the interests of States; for since the seventeenth century this doctrine had been fostered by those closely connected with statecraft, as offering a fund of practical knowledge useful for the same.

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Thus we see that the various threads of our investigation have been brought together into two nodal points: namely, the problem of the relationship between politics and morality, and also the establishing of a connection between politics and history, between the idea of *raison d'état* and the idea of Historicism. In addition, the task presented itself of investigating the changes in statecraft due to the juxtaposition and intermingling of the timeless and the contemporaneous constituents. We shall leave the creative solution of this latter task to other hands, and give chief place to the first two problems; we shall consider ourselves justified in following these problems together through the

centuries of recent history, because one may assume that from the outset they exerted a reciprocal effect on one another. In the process, the principal emphasis will sometimes come to be laid upon the one problem, and sometimes more on the other. In order to keep control of this prodigious amount of material, we shall content ourselves with a procedure of selection. To attempt to write a history of *raison d'état* and of State-interests in all its aspects, would mean trying to write a universal political history from definite points of view. The executive politicians will be bound to predominate there; the great political systems of a Charles V, a Richelieu, a Cromwell, a Frederick the Great, a Napoleon and a Bismarck, must be portrayed, and the connecting-links between them ought not to be neglected. One would also have to delve more deeply, in an attempt to discover the various different strengths with which *raison d'état* has operated in different epochs and in different cultures. Just why, in the more recent centuries in the West, does it have such an unusual plastic force and fluidity, whereas at other times and in other cultures it often led more to permanent conditions of historical life? The Great Power guided on rational lines (which, together with rational wholesale manufacture, is the most striking product of modern Europeanism [1]) would thereby have its intellectual roots laid bare. But the idea of *raison d'état* itself would appear much more clearly in its historical workings-out, than in its conscious comprehension as an idea. Certainly it would not be lacking in characteristic confessions by the protagonists, concerning the idea that guided them; but for the most part they have not felt themselves compelled to carry out any consistent intellectual analysis of this idea. To write the history of the *idea* of *raison d'état* would on the other hand mean carrying out just such an investigation of the intellectual penetration and comprehension of *raison d'état* in the changing course of time. In earlier times it has been the custom to count this task (which hitherto has only occasionally been attempted) as part of the history of political theories; and in any case to treat this mode of history itself, on the pattern of a history of dogma, as a succession of doctrines, loosely connected with general history. This anaemic and levelling type of treatment is no longer adequate for us today. The history of ideas must far rather be treated as an essential and indispensable part of universal history. It marshals together and presents what the thinking man has made of what happened to him historically, how he has mastered it intellectually, what sort of intellectual consequences he has drawn from it; to a certain extent, therefore, it mirrors the essence of things that happen, as reflected in minds that are directed to the essential element in life. For this reason, however, the history of ideas is no mere shadow-play or sequence of grey theories; on the contrary, it is the life-blood of events,

[1] Cf. Troeltsch, *Historismus*, I, 720.

absorbed into the life-blood of those men who are called upon to express the essential element of their epoch. The ideology of a significant thinker, which has grown up out of the experiences of his time, resembles the drop of attar of roses which has been won from hundreds of rose-petals. By converting experiences into ideas, Man frees himself from the pressure of experience, and creates the fresh powers which fashion life. Ideas are the highest points, to which Man can attain, in which his observing mind and his creative strength unite together and achieve a collective performance. For their own sake (as well as for the sake of their effects) they are worthy of being looked at from the point of view of universal history. A history of opinions (Herder already remarked) 'would really be the key to the history of deeds'.[1] The ideas, which guide historical life, do certainly not indeed spring solely from the intellectual workshop of the great thinkers; on the contrary, they have a much broader and deeper origin. But it is in this workshop that they are condensed and solidified; it is there, in many cases, that they first assume the form which will have an effect on the progress of events and the actions of men.

These considerations have given us the courage to put forward the selection of significant, or merely characteristic, doctrines which we are offering here, as a history of the idea of *raison d'état*. It can rank as such a history if it has been successful enough in the matter of choice and treatment, to the extent that all the more profound stirrings of the modern mind with respect to *raison d'état*—as also those thinkers and teachers, who have exerted a particularly strong influence on historical life—are, in the course of it, brought properly into perspective. Each of the thinkers selected is, we hope, representative of his epoch. Machiavelli, Frederick the Great and Hegel emerge as those who have simultaneously exerted a powerful influence on historical life.

The real theme of this book, therefore, is to examine the impact of the idea of *raison d'état* on the various *Weltanschauungen* and modes of intellectual thought, and to follow up the effects of this impact through the centuries of recent history.

It is a tragic process, a continuously repeated combat against insuperable forces of destiny, which we have to present. In and out among all the other bright threads of the historical weft, there twines uninterruptedly (and everywhere immediately recognizable) the red, only too often blood-red, thread of *raison d'état*. In closing, let us also confess the personal motives, which led us to select the problems dealt with here. The fact that they grew up out of those that were treated in *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, will be obvious to anyone who reads both books. During the first years of the Great War (with their serious and deeply stirred, yet at the same time optimistic mood) the plan was

[1] *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, 5th collection, No. 58.

conceived of examining closely the connection between statecraft and interpretation of history, and of demonstrating that the theory of the interests of States was a preliminary stage of modern Historicism.[1] But then, on account of the upheavals that followed on the collapse of Germany in 1918, the really central problem of *raison d'état* stood out more and more clearly before one's eyes, in all its frightfulness. A change took place in historical opinion. A tree may be forgiven if, from being exposed to the elements, it becomes forced somewhat out of its original line of growth. It is to be hoped that this book will also be pardoned for any discrepancies, which will at least show that the book has grown organically, rather than been fabricated.

[1] The essay on the doctrine of State interests in Richelieu's France in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 123 (which was originally intended to form the beginning of this book), was still directed exclusively towards this end.

BOOK ONE

THE AGE OF NASCENT ABSOLUTISM

CHAPTER ONE

MACHIAVELLI

WHATEVER the circumstances the business of ruling is, as we have remarked, always carried out in accordance with the principles of *raison d'état*. *Raison d'état* may be deflected or hindered by real or imaginary obstacles, but it is part and parcel of ruling. It is not realized, however, as a principle and an idea until a particular stage of development has been reached; namely when the State has become strong enough to break down those obstacles, and to lay down its own unqualified right to existence in the face of all other vital forces. An account of this process from the standpoint of universal history would have to embrace and compare all cultures; it would have to begin by examining the idea of *raison d'état* in the ancient world, and analysing its relationship with the spirit of that epoch. For both the free city-states and the monarchies of antiquity are teeming with the problems of *raison d'état* and with attempts to formulate it. In the dialogue between the Athenians and the citizens of Melos, given by Thucydides in Book 5 (ch. 85 ff.), the harsh and frightening aspects of *raison d'état* and power politics are stated very succinctly. In his *Phoenician Virgins*, Euripides makes Eteocles say: 'For if one must do evil, then it is good to do it for the sake of authority; but otherwise one ought to act rightly.' [1] In Book 5 of his *Politics*, Aristotle gives a picture of the rationally conceived way in which a tyrant can rule. In Book 3 of *De officiis*, Cicero discussed fully from the Stoic point of view the conflict between morality and what is useful to the State, and stated regretfully: *Utilitatis specie in republica saepissime peccatur* (ch. 11). The great historical works of Tacitus are steeped in the idea of *raison d'état*; as evidence of this we may quote one statement, from the lips of Cassius in Book 14 of the Annals: *Habet aliquid ex iniquo omne magnum exemplum, quod contra singulos utilitate publica rependitur*. Subsequently, after he had been republished by Justus Lipsius in 1574, Tacitus became the great teacher of *raison d'état* (though not to any great extent for Machiavelli, who drew chiefly on Livy, Aristotle and

[1] *Εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν· τἄλλα δ' εὐσεβεῖν χρεών.*

Xenephon); then for a whole century there blossomed a literature of Tacitists [1] who exploited him politically. Justus Lipsius himself put together his grammar of politics (*Politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex, qui ad principatum maxime spectant*, 1589) entirely out of maxims from antiquity, principally from Tacitus; he thus made available a mine of information (which is still valuable today) about the opinions of the ancient world on the subject of *raison d'état*. And even if the ancients had not coined for it any particular expression which was in general use, yet we frequently meet with *ratio reipublicae* in Cicero, and *ratio et utilitas reipublicae* in Florus.[2]

Polytheism and a secular view of human values were what nourished *raison d'état* in antiquity. At the period when the city-state was flourishing, the thing most worth living for was the State itself. The ethics of individual and of national conduct thus coincided, and so there was no conflict between politics and ethics. There was also no universal religion, to try and restrict by its commands the free exercise of State powers. The national religion which existed tended rather to favour this free exercise, by glorifying heroism. As the city-state began to dissolve, the heroic ideal passed over into the new form which power assumed in the State where men struggled fiercely, each for himself; this was the State of the ruthless man of power, classically portrayed by Plato in Callicles of the *Gorgias*.[3] Altogether the ancient conception of *raison d'état* remained at this time firmly fixed in personalities, and served to vindicate the mode of action which was forced on contemporary rulers by pressure of the situation. It never seemed to rise (or at least not at all consistently) towards the conception of a supra-individual and independent state personality, which would stand over against the actual rulers of the time.[4]

[1] Boccalini will serve us later as an example of these. As an expression of the high opinion in which Tacitus was held, the words of Gabriel Naudé in his *Bibliographia politica* (edition of 1642, p. 233) may be reproduced: *At vero, quoniam sedet ipse velut omnium princeps ac imperator in orchestra, aut potius sedem sibi facit in machina, ex qua cum stupore et admiratione politicas difficultates componit, virtutum suarum majestate omne fastigium humanum excedens, certe consultius esse mihi persuadeo, non hunc tenui sermone velut hominem, sed eloquenti silentio Deitatis instar venerari*, etc. On the Tacitists, see p. 247 of the same, and Toffanin, *Machiavelli e il Tacitismo*, 1921. An intelligent and informative book, but one which exaggerates the significance of Tacitus for Machiavelli.

[2] *Cicero ad Plancum* (Bk. 10 *ad fam. epist.* 16): Do not wait upon the Senate, let yourself be the Senate, *quocunque te ratio reipublicae ducet sequare. Florus*, Bk. I, ch. 8, speaks of the seven kings of Rome *tam variis ingenio, ut reipublicae ratio et utilitas postulabat.*

[3] Compare now Menzel, *Kallikles*, 1923; and the stimulating Berlin University lecture of 1924 by Werner Jaeger, on the ethics of the Greek State in the age of Plato.

[4] Kaerst, *Studien zur Entwicklung u. theoret. Begründung der Monarchie im Altertum*, p. 10f.

An epilogue and a final crushing judgment on the ancient view of *raison d'état* was given by Christianity, when Augustine said: *Remota justitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia.*[1] The new universal religion set up at the same time a universal moral command, which even the State must obey, and turned the eyes of individual men on other-worldly values; thus all secular values, including heroism as the herald of power politics and *raison d'état*, were caused to give ground. Then in the Middle Ages Germanic jurisprudence combined with Christian ethics in keeping down the State. The State certainly existed in the Middle Ages, but it did not rank supreme. Law was set above it; it was a means for enforcing the law. 'Politics and *raison d'état* were not recognized at all in the Middle Ages.' Naturally, of course, the general practice was different from this theoretical view. Therefore, 'since there was no place in the legal and constitutional theory of mediaeval times for the demands of policy, these forced their own elemental way out'.[2]

But in the later Middle Ages these irregular outlets began to be regularized. The struggle between Church and Papacy fostered the conscious power politics of great rulers like the Emperor Frederick II and Philip IV of France. The Emperor Charles IV in Germany and King Louis XI in France were examples of a thoroughly unscrupulous and rational art of government, based on their own authority. Even the Church itself, by its inner transformations, by the progressive permeation of the Papacy with worldly political interests, by the often very utilitarian approach of the Church Councils, and by the rational perfecting of Papal finance, paved the way for a new spirit in the art of government. The strongest motive for this, however, still lay in the incipient growth of national States, and in the struggles of the more important dynasties, whose possessions had been amassed by feudal methods, to safeguard these possessions by non-feudal means, by adhesive methods of government. The universal ideas of this mediaeval *corpus christianum* moved continuously towards a new centre of Will concentrated in the State.

Late mediaeval thought began further to distinguish the ideal law of Nature from statute law, and thereby to diminish the influence which Germanic jurisprudence had hitherto exerted on the State. 'Henceforth the power of the State is set above statute law, and comes under natural law. Thus it is no longer the case that every insignificant individual right is placed outside the grasp of the State; it is only the great fundamental principles of Natural Law that remain beyond its reach.'[3]

[1] *De civitate Dei*, IV, 4; for the correct meaning of the remark, cf. Bernheim, *Mittelalterliche Zeitanschauungen usw.*, I, 37.

[2] F. Kern, *Recht und Verfassung im Mittelalter*, *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 120, 57 and 63 f., a fundamental essay.

[3] Kern, *loc. cit.* p. 74.

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Here and there at this time one notices a few basic admissions of the new conception of necessity of State. In the fourteenth century Philipp von Leiden, a priest in the service of the Count of Holland, wrote *de cura reipublicae et sorte principantis*; he advanced the proposition that a territorial ruler ought to revoke a privilege which he had granted to a single town or to a single person, if it was injuring the *publica utilitas*.[1] In an even more general manner Jean Gerson declared in 1404 that if any laws conflicted with the aim of maintaining the peace (which was the supreme purpose of the State in the Middle Ages), then the laws ought to be interpreted more in accordance with that aim, or they would have to be completely abolished, since *necessitas legem non habet*.[2] Even more audacious was a certain doctor of theology in the service of the Duke of Burgundy, named Jean Petit. In a long and exceedingly sophistical dissertation, which he delivered in Paris in March 1408, he defended his master for having caused the murder of Duke Louis of Orleans; and he went on to say that promises and alliances between noblemen did not need to be kept, if keeping them would entail injury to the ruler and to the commonwealth. He even said that to keep such promises would be completely against the laws of God and Nature.[3]

A systematic search among the sources and authors of the late Middle Ages would probably discover still further opinions of this kind, and thus throw light on the gradual and continuing loosening up of the mediaeval feudal barriers. But a theory on a grand scale has not yet grown up out of it.

Nevertheless the modern Western world has inherited one legacy of extraordinary importance from the Christian and Germanic Middle Ages. It has inherited a sharper and more painful sense of the conflict between *raison d'état* on the one hand, and ethics and law on the other; and also the feeling which is constantly being aroused, that ruthless *raison d'état* is really sinful, a sin against God and divine standards, a

[1] v. Below, *Territorium und Stadt*, p. 190, and H. Wilfert, *Philipp von Leiden*, 1925.

[2] Platzhoff, *Die Theorie von der Mordbefugnis der Obrigkeit im 16. Jahrhundert*, p. 27; cf. also Gierke, *Althusius*, 279, and v. Bezold, *Aus Mittelalter und Renaissance*, p. 257 f. (on Pontano).

[3] '*La quinte verité en cas d'aliance, seremens et promesses, est des confédéracions faictes de chevalier à autre en quelque manière que ce soit et puist estre, s'il advient icellui pour garder et tenir tourne ou préjudice de son prince, de ses enfans et de la chose publique, n'est tenu de les garder. En tel cas seroit fait contre les lois naturelles et divines.*' *La chronique de Monstrelet p. p. Douet-d'Arcq*, 1857, I, 215 f. (Bk. I, ch. 39). In the same 2, 417 (Bk. I, ch. 113) the unfavourable verdict of the Paris theologians: *Ceste assercion touche à la subversion de toute la chose publique et de chascun roy ou prince*, etc. But the Council of Constance did not dare to condemn out of hand Jean Petit's doctrine of tyrannicide. v. Bezold, *Aus Mittelalter und Renaissance*, p. 274. On Jean Petit, cf. also O. Cartellieri, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Herzöge von Burgund V., Sitzungsber. d. Heidelb. Ak.*, 1914.

sin against the sanctity and inviolability of the law of the good old times. The ancient world was already familiar with these sins of *raison d'état*, and did not omit to criticize them, but without taking them very much to heart. The very secularity of human values in the ancient world made it possible to view *raison d'état* with a certain calmness and to consider it the outcome of natural forces which were not to be subdued. Sinfulness in antiquity was still a perfectly naïve sinfulness, not yet disquieted and frightened by the gulf between heaven and hell which was to be opened up by Christianity. This dualistic picture of the world, which was held by dogmatic Christianity, has had a deep influence even on the period of a Christianity that is growing undogmatic; and it has given the problem of *raison d'état* this deeply felt overtone of tragedy, which it never carried in antiquity.

It was therefore a historical necessity that the man, with whom the history of the idea of *raison d'état* in the modern Western world begins and from whom Machiavellism takes its name, had to be a heathen; he had to be a man to whom the fear of hell was unknown, and who on the contrary could set about his life-work of analysing the essence of *raison d'état* with all the naïvety of the ancient world.

Niccolo Machiavelli was the first to do this. We are concerned here with the thing itself, not with the name for it, which he still did not possess. Machiavelli had not yet compressed his thoughts on *raison d'état* into a single slogan. Fond as he was of forceful and meaningful catch-words (coining many himself), he did not always feel the need to express in words the supreme ideas which filled him; if, that is, the thing itself seemed to him self-evident, if it filled him completely. For example, critics have noticed that he fails to express any opinion about the real final purpose of the State, and they have mistakenly deduced from this that he did not reflect on the subject.[1] But, as we shall soon see, his whole life was bound up with a definite supreme purpose of the State. And in the same way his whole political way of thought is nothing else but a continual process of thinking about *raison d'état*.

Machiavelli's system of thought was brought into being by an absolutely special and sublime, and at the same time extraordinary, conjunction of events: the coinciding of a political collapse with a spiritual and intellectual renaissance. In the fifteenth century Italy enjoyed national independence, and was, in the pregnant words of Machiavelli (*Principe*, ch. 20), *in un certo modo bilanciata* by the system of five States which kept each other within bounds: Naples, the Papal States, Florence, Milan and Venice. There was growing up in Italy, fostered by all the realistic elements in Renaissance culture and directly promoted by the arrangement (which was just coming into fashion) of having

[1] Heyer, *Der Machiavellismus*, 1918, p. 29; cf. also A. Schmidt, *N. Machiavelli und die allgemeine Staatslehre der Gegenwart*, 1907, p. 104.

permanent embassies, a form of statecraft which was carried on according to fixed and definite rules. This statecraft culminated in the principle of *divide et impera*, it taught that everything ought to be considered with a view to its usefulness, it surmounted all religious and moral limitations in a naïvely playful manner, but itself functioned by means of relatively simple and mechanical operations and thought-processes.[1] Only the catastrophes which overtook Italy after 1494, with the invasion by the French and the Spanish, the decline of Neapolitan and Milanese independence, the precipitate change in the form of government in Florence, and most of all the collective impact of foreign countries on the entire Apennine peninsula—only these catastrophes succeeded in maturing the spirit of politics to that point of passionate strength, depth and acuteness, which is revealed in Machiavelli. As a secretary and diplomat of the Florentine Republic until the year 1512, he learnt everything that Italian statecraft had achieved up to that time, and he was also beginning already to shape his own original thoughts on the subject. What caused them to pour out suddenly after 1512 was the crushing fate which overtook both him and the republic in that year. As a member of the party which had been overthrown and was being temporarily persecuted, Machiavelli, in order to re-establish himself, was forced to seek the favour of the new rulers, the Medicis, who were once more in power. Thus a conflict arose between his own personal and egotistical interests, and the ideals of republican freedom and the city-state which he had held up to now. It is indeed the greatness of Machiavelli that he strove now to settle this conflict, and bring it to a final issue. Against the obscure and not particularly attractive background of his own naïve and unscrupulous egoism, there came into being the new and masterly reflections on the relation between republic and monarchy, and about a new national mission of monarchy; it was in a context of all this that the whole essence of *raison d'état*, compounded of mingled ingredients both pure and impure, both lofty and hateful, achieved a ruthless expression. He had reached his fortieth year—the age at which productive scientific minds often give of their best—when after 1513 he wrote the little book about the prince and the *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*.

A spiritual and intellectual renaissance must also, as we said, have been a formative influence. Machiavelli did not by any means absorb the whole of the Renaissance movement. He did not share its religious needs, or its urge towards speculative philosophy; and, although unconsciously steeped and bathed in its aesthetic spirit, he still did not

[1] How the new calculating and rational spirit also arose simultaneously in economic life, particularly in the two mercantile States of Venice and Florence, is shown by L. Brentano, *Die Anfänge des modernen Kapitalismus*, 1916. Cf. v. Bezold, *loc. cit.*, p. 255 f.

value its artistic attempts particularly highly. His passionate interest was the State, the analysis and computation of its different forms, functions and conditions for existence; and thus it was that the specifically rational, empirical and calculating element in Italian Renaissance culture reached its peak in him. But a mere cool consideration of questions of political power would not have signified any complete spiritual and intellectual renewal. The faith and energy necessary to sustain it, and out of which the ideal of a rebirth could grow, were, so far as Machiavelli shared in them, of ancient origin. The spirit of antiquity was certainly not signalized in him (as it was in so many humanists of the Renaissance) by a merely learned and literary regeneration, with the bloodless rhetorical inspiration of a schoolmaster. Often his enthusiasm for the heroes and thinkers of antiquity shows a somewhat classicist lack of independence and judgment. But in the main the element of antiquity in him rose anew out of the tradition and hereditary feeling, which in Italy had never been entirely lost. In spite of his outward respect for the Church and for Christianity (frequently mingled with irony and criticism), and in spite of the undeniable influence which the Christian view had on him, Machiavelli was at heart a heathen, who levelled at Christianity the familiar and serious reproach (Disc., II, 2) of having made men humble, unmanly and feeble. With a romantic longing he gazed towards the strength, grandeur and beauty of life in antiquity, and towards the ideals of its *mondana gloria*. He wanted to bring back once again that united strength of sense and intellect in the natural genuine man, where *grandezza dell'animo* and *fortezza del corpo* combined together to create heroism. He broke then, with the dualistic and onesidedly spiritualizing ethic of Christianity, which depreciated the natural impulses of the senses. Although indeed he retained some of its structural ideas about the difference between good and evil, he strove principally for a new naturalistic ethic which would follow the dictates of nature impartially and resolutely. For whoever follows these dictates (as he said once) can find no fault in carrying on lighthearted amorous affairs in the midst of serious business—even Nature is full of change and contradiction.[1]

This kind of naturalism can easily lead to a harmless and unreflecting multiplicity in the question of human values. But (in spite of the offering which he gladly brought to the altar of Venus) Machiavelli concentrated all his real and supreme values in what he called *virtù*. This concept is exceedingly rich in meaning, and although it was taken over from the tradition of antiquity and humanism, it had been felt and elaborated in a quiet individual manner; ethical qualities were certainly embraced in it, but it was fundamentally intended to portray something dynamic, which Nature had implanted in Man—heroism and

[1] To Vettori, 31st Jan. 1515. *Lettere di Mach. ed. Alvisi.*

the strength for great political and warlike achievements, and first and foremost, perhaps, strength for the founding and preservation of flourishing States, particularly republics.[1] For in the republics, of which Rome in its great republican period seemed to him an ideal example, he saw the conditions most favourable for the generation of *virtù*. It therefore embraced the civic virtues and those of the ruling class; it embraced a readiness to devote oneself to the common good, as well as the wisdom, energy and ambition of the great founders and rulers of States. But the *virtù* which the founder and ruler of a State had to possess counted for Machiavelli as *virtù* of a higher order. For in his opinion this kind of *virtù* was able, by means of appropriate 'regulations', to distil out of the thoroughly bad and wretched material of average specimens of humanity the other kind of *virtù* in the sense of civic virtue; to a certain extent the latter was *virtù* of a secondary quality, and could only be durable if it was rooted in a people whose spirit was naturally fresh and unspoilt. This separation of *virtù* into two types, one original and the other derived, is of exceptional significance for a complete understanding of the political aims of Machiavelli. For it shows that he was a long way from believing uncritically in the natural and imperishable virtue of a republican citizen, and that he viewed even the republic more from above, from the standpoint of the rulers, than from underneath, from the standpoint of broad-based democracy. He appreciated the proverb, which was popular in his time, that *in piazza* your opinions were not the same as they were *in palazzo* (Disc., II, 47). His republican ideal therefore contained a strain of monarchism, in so far as he believed that even republics could not come into existence without the help of great individual ruling personalities and organizers. He had learnt from Polybius the theory that the fortunes of every State are repeated in a cycle, and that the golden age of a republic is bound to be followed by its decline and fall. And so he saw that, in order to restore the necessary quantum of *virtù* which a republic had lost by sinking to such a low point, and thus raise up the State once again, there was only one means to be adopted; namely, that the creative *virtù* of one individual, of one *mano regia*, one *podestà quasi regia* (Disc., I, 18 and 55), should take the State in hand and revive it. Indeed he went so far as to believe that for republics which were completely corrupt and no longer capable of regeneration, monarchy was the only possible form of government. Thus his concept of *virtù* formed a close link between republican and monarchical tendencies, and, after the collapse of the Florentine Republic, enabled him without inconsistency to set his hopes on the rule of the Medicis, and to write for them the Book of the Prince. In the same way it made it possible for him immediately afterwards to take

[1] Cf. the work of E. W. Mayers mentioned by me, *Machiavellis Geschichtsauffassung und sein Begriff virtù*, 1912.

up again in the *Discorsi* the strain of republicanism, and to weigh republic and monarchy against one another.

Moreover his own special ethic of *virtù*—a product of the joyous worldly spirit of the Renaissance—begins now to throw light on the relation in which he stands to the ordinary Christian, and so-called genuine, morality; this relationship has been the cause of much dispute and a continual subject of reproof to Machiavelli. We have already remarked that he retained the basic Christian views on the difference between good and evil. When he advocated evil actions, he never denied them the epithet evil or attempted any hypocritical concealment. Nor did he dare to embody direct traits of morally wicked behaviour in his ideal of *virtù*. In Chapter 8 of the *Principe*, which deals with Agathocles, he says that to murder one's co-citizens, to betray one's friends, to be lacking in loyalty, piety and religion, cannot deserve the name of *virtù*; these things can achieve mastery, but not glory. And yet in Agathocles, who behaved in this way, he recognized at the same time a real *virtù* and *grandezza dell'animo*, i.e. great virtues of a ruler. The ethical sphere of his *virtù* therefore lay in juxtaposition to the usual moral sphere like a kind of world of its own; but for him it was the higher world, because it was the vital source of the State, of the *vivere politico*, the supreme task of human creativity. And because it was for him the higher world, so it could be permitted to trespass and encroach on the moral world in order to achieve its aims. These encroachments and infringements, these 'sins' in the Christian sense, never ceased to be judged by him as immoral, and did not indeed constitute *virtù* itself—but they could in the last resort (as we shall soon see more clearly) arise out of *virtù*.

Let us first look more closely at his theory of *virtù*, and at the striking mixture of pessimism and idealism, of mechanistic and vitalistic elements, which go to compose it. In the *Discorsi* (I, 4), he says that of their own accord men will never do anything good, unless they are driven to it by some 'necessity'. Hunger and poverty, he goes on, make men industrious, and laws make them good. The penalties imposed on any infringement of the laws lead on towards a recognition of justice. For him, therefore, moral goodness and justice were produced and could be produced by the constraining power of the State. How high his opinion was of the State, and how little he thought of individual human beings! But this rigid positivist causal nexus was relaxed through the medium of *virtù*, and by a belief in the creative powers of great men, who, through their own *virtù* and the wise regulations which they made, were able to raise up the average level of humanity to a new, secondary form of *virtù*. Then too it was another mechanistic and fatalistic belief of his that, since the world always remained the same and all things were repeated in a cycle, *virtù* did not exist in the world in unlimited

supply, but was passed round in the world continually, and now this, now that people was privileged to possess it. This was echoed by Hegel three hundred years later when, in his theory about the 'dominant peoples of world history' (who are entrusted by the World Spirit from time to time with the task of directing its affairs in the world), he made the fatalistic element part of a sublime philosophy of progress and ascent. Machiavelli however contented himself with stating resignedly that only in ancient times did it happen that a single nation was blessed with a preponderance of this *virtù*; in modern times it was divided up amongst a number of nations. This brings out very clearly the similarity and the difference between the centuries. Surrounded by the collapse of the political world in which they lived, both thinkers cast longing eyes on the representatives of strength and efficiency in world history—Hegel with an optimistic belief in progress, the result of the century of the Enlightenment, Machiavelli with the old belief in the everlasting similarity of historical life, a belief which had always been fostered by the Christian disdain for this world and which the vital energy of the Renaissance had not been able to break down. But this vital energy was still strong enough not to lose courage even amid the collapse and in the face of the contempt of humanity, and strong enough to watch out for fresh *virtù*. For the development and creation of *virtù* was for Machiavelli the ideal, and completely self-evident, purpose of the State. To raise his own nation by means of *virtù* from the low point to which it had sunk, and to regenerate the State, if this was still possible (he continually wavered between doubting this and believing it), became his life interest. But this new political idealism was now indeed burdened with the serious problematical element which was inherent in the character of *raison d'état*. This brings us nearer to our real task.

It was certainly impossible, once the moral and religious bond had been severed which held together the mediaeval Christian ideal of life, to set up immediately a new worldly system of ideals which would have the same inner unity and compactness. For, to minds freshly released from the restraints of the Middle Ages, so many provinces of life were now opened up simultaneously that it was not possible at once to find a distinctive point of view, from which the secularized world could be grasped and comprehended once again as a harmonious unity. One made discoveries, first in one place, then in another; one devoted oneself enthusiastically and often quite wholeheartedly to the discovery of the moment and became so completely taken up with it, that one had no opportunity to examine the contradictions and discrepancies between the experiences one had newly acquired and the human values which had held up till now. Machiavelli possessed this one-sided passion for discovery to an extraordinary degree. He threw himself on his particular aim of the moment in such a way that occasionally all he himself

had previously thought and said was entirely forgotten. In a quite undaunted, now and then almost fanatical manner, he deduced the most extreme, and sometimes the most terrible consequences from the truths which he had found, without ever testing their reaction on other beliefs he held. In the course of his experimental discoveries he was also fond of changing his standpoint, and identifying himself for the moment with widely different interests in the political struggle, so that for each interested party, whether it be a prince or an enemy of princes, he could devise some powerful remedy, some *medicina forte* (and wherever possible a *regola generale*). His occasional recipes, then, should often be taken as having a certain degree of relativity. And these tendencies of his should be kept firmly in view.

The most serious discrepancy in his system of thought—a discrepancy which he never succeeded in eliminating and which he never even tried to eliminate—lay between the newly discovered ethical sphere of *virtù*, and of the State animated by *virtù*, on the one hand, and the old sphere of religion and morality on the other. This *virtù* of Machiavelli was originally a natural and dynamic idea, which (not altogether unhappily) contained a certain quality of barbarity (*ferocia*); he now considered that it ought not to remain a mere unregulated natural force (which would have been in accordance with the spirit of the Renaissance) but that it ought to be raised into a *virtù ordinata*, into a rationally and purposively directed code of values for rulers and citizens. The *virtù ordinata* naturally set a high value on religion and morality, on account of the influence they exerted towards maintaining the State. In particular, Machiavelli spoke out very forcibly on the subject of the indispensability of religion (Disc., I, 11 and 12); at any rate, he was strongly in favour of a religion which would make men courageous and proud. He once named 'religion, laws, military affairs' together in one breath, as the three fundamental pillars of the State. But, in the process, religion and morality fell from the status of intrinsic values, and became nothing more than means towards the goal of a State animated by *virtù*. It was this that led him on to make the double-edged recommendation, which resounded so fearsomely down the centuries to come, inciting statesmen to an irreligious and at the same time dishonest scepticism: the advice that even a religion tinged with error and deception ought to be supported, and the wiser one was, the more one would do it (Disc., I, 12). Whoever thought like this was, from a religious point of view, completely adrift. What final certainty and sure foundation was there left in life, if even an unbelieved and false religion could count as valuable, and when moral goodness was seen as being a product of fear and custom? In this godless world of Nature man was left alone with only himself and the powers Nature had given him, to carry on the fight against all the fateful forces wielded by this same Nature.

And this was exactly what Machiavelli conceived his own situation to be.

It is striking and forceful to observe how he strove to rise superior to it. On the one side *fortuna*, on the other *virtù*—this was how he interpreted it. Many people today (he says in ch. 25 of the *Principe*), in the face of the various blows of Fate and unsuspected revolutions we have experienced, are now of the opinion that all wisdom is entirely unavailing against the action of Fate, and that we must just let it do what it likes with us. He admits that even he himself has occasionally felt like this, when in a gloomy mood. But he considered it would be lacking in *virtù* to surrender to the feeling. One must rouse oneself and build canals and dams against the torrent of Fate, and then one will be able to keep it within bounds. Only half our actions are governed by Fortune; the other half, or almost half, is left to us. 'Where men have not much *virtù*, then *fortuna* shows its strength clearly enough. And because it is full of change, so there are numerous changes in republics and states. And these will always go on changing, until sooner or later there will come a man who so loves antiquity, that he will regulate *fortuna*; then it will not be able to show every twenty-four hours how much it is capable of accomplishing' (Disc., II, 30). *Fortuna* has got to be beaten and bruised like a woman one wants to possess, and boldness and barbarity will always be more successful there than coldness. But this boldness has got to be united with great cunning and calculation, for each situation of fate demands a method specially suited for dealing with it. He began to meditate very deeply on just this particular problem, for it showed up very clearly both the powers and the limitations of *virtù*, and of humanity altogether. The individual agent cannot escape the nature he is born with. He acts in such and such a way because this nature requires it. Hence it arises that, according to the disposition of Fate, this same method which his character dictates will turn out well one day, and badly the next (Disc., III, 9). An insight of this kind could lead back to fatalism. But the effect on him of all these doubts and impulses was like the bending of a taut-strung bow. He let fly his arrows with all the more force.

Enemies learn to use each other's weapons. *Virtù* has the task of forcing back *fortuna*. *Fortuna* is malicious, so *virtù* must also be malicious, when there is no other way open. This expresses quite plainly the real spiritual origin of Machiavellism: the infamous doctrine that, in national behaviour, even unclean methods are justified, when it is a question of winning or of keeping the power which is necessary for the State. It is the picture of Man, stripped of all transcendent good qualities, left alone on the battlefield to face the daemonic forces of Nature, who now feels himself possessed too of a daemonic natural strength and returns blow for blow. In Machiavelli's opinion, *virtù* had a perfectly

genuine right to take up any weapon, for the purpose of mastering Fortune. One can easily see that this doctrine, which appeared so dualistic on the outside, had really sprung from the background of a naïve Monism, which made all the powers of life into forces of Nature. It now became a presupposition for the discovery which Machiavelli had made about the essence of *raison d'état*.

But in order to make this discovery, yet another theory was needed—one which he thought out and applied just as clearly and consistently as he did the theory of the struggle between *virtù* and *fortuna*. This was the theory of *necessità*. *Virtù*, *fortuna* and *necessità* are three words which keep on sounding again and again throughout his writings with a kind of brazen ring. These words, and perhaps also the refrain of the *armi proprie* (which sums up the demands he made on the State in the way of military matters and power politics), show his ability to condense the wealth of his experience and thought, and how the rich edifice of his mind rested on a few, quite simple, but solid pillars. For him *virtù* and *necessità* were related in a way very similar to that in which, in modern philosophy, the sphere of values is related to the sphere of causal connection; i.e. where the causal connection provides the means and possibility of realizing the values. If *virtù* was the vital power of men, a power which created and maintained States, and gave them sense and meaning, then *necessità* was the causal pressure, the means of bringing the sluggish masses into the form required by *virtù*. We have already heard how he traced back the origin of morality to 'necessity'. We have discussed fully (so he says in the *Discorsi*, III, 12) how useful *necessità* is for human actions, and to what glory it can lead on. And (as several moral philosophers have written) the hands and speech of Man—which are the two principal tools for his ennoblement—would never have functioned completely, and human achievements would never have reached their present high level, if they had not been pushed to it by *necessità*. The old military commanders recognized the *virtù di tal necessità* and used it to instil into their soldiers the dogged spirit of combat, when they planned to put them in a situation where they would *have* to fight. Come with me, a Volscian leader shouts to the soldiers round him, in Livy (4, 28), *virtute pares, quae ultimum ac maximum telum est, necessitate superiores estis*. These were words to warm Machiavelli's heart. The more *necessità* there is, he insists in the *Discorsi*, I, 1, the more *virtù* there will be also, and *necessità* can bring us to many things, which reason is not strong enough to drive us to (Disc., I, 1). And alongside the conception of *virtù ordinata* he placed the equally characteristic conception of *necessità ordinata dalle leggi* (Disc., I, 1) as engendering first-class human material for the State. Thus it is always a question of following the natural forces of life, but also at the same time of regulating them by means of reason. If one were to adopt for a

moment the unlovely nomenclature of '-isms', one could call his system a triad of naturalism, voluntarism and rationalism. But without his belief (rooted in universal history) in the positive *blessing* of *necessità*, without the real warmth which he gave it, he would never have come to proclaim with such determination and conviction that which one can call the *curse* of *necessità*, of necessity of State.

One more trait of his personality must have contributed: namely, the quite unconventional and at the same time radical nature of his thought, which never shrank back before any abyss. Certainly his contemporaries too had long learnt never to shrink back before any moral abyss, and to wade quite cheerfully through any filth. For if it had not been for the general stultifying of moral feeling in life, and without the examples offered by the Papacy from the time of Sixtus IV and Alexander VI, with his frightful son Cesar Borgia, Machiavelli would never have had the milieu required for his new ideas about the use of immoral methods in politics. They were indeed not new as regards content; but they were new in the sense that he dared to express them, and to combine them into a system which embraced a universal outlook. For up till now theory had only limped after practice. The selfsame humanists who, like Pontanus at the court of Naples, saw clearly all the dark side of the new statecraft, were indeed prepared to permit cunning and deception when it was for the good of the community; but after that they fell back once more on the formal pattern of the figure of the Prince, filled in with classic phrases.[1] If I am to offer something really useful, says Machiavelli, it seems to me more suitable to follow the real truth of things, rather than the imaginary picture one has of them. Many people have imagined for themselves republics and principalities, the like of which one has never seen or even thought possible; for the difference between what one actually does and what one ought to do is so great that whoever, in considering how people ought to live, omits to consider how they behave, is riding for a fall. That is to say, the man who makes it a rule in all circumstances to perform nothing but good actions, is bound to go under amongst so many who are evil. Therefore it is 'necessary' for a prince, if he is to maintain his position, to learn also how not to be good, and then to utilize or not utilize this knowledge, as *necessità* prescribes.

It is worthy of notice that Machiavelli did not introduce near the beginning of his essay on the Prince this new principle of method—a principle which was to break fresh ground for so many centuries, and which was so purely empirical and so completely free from presuppositions. He does not bring it in till much further on, in Chapter 15. For he himself underwent development, during the course of his work

[1] Benoist, *L'Etat italien avant Machiavell. Revue des deux mondes*, 1st May 1907, p. 182; cf. Platzhoff, *loc. cit.*, p. 28.

on the book. Chapter 15 belongs (as we have tried to prove elsewhere [1]), not to the original conception of the *Principe*, but rather to an extension of it which probably came soon afterwards. Henceforth he always exercised the new principle, which was closely akin to the aesthetic honesty and directness of Florentine art. Then, when he was in the full spate of work, he suddenly became conscious that he was treading new paths. It was the climax of his life, and at the same time also a turning point for the history of European thought. And in this matter history of thought touched very closely upon the history of nations; they were both struck by the *same* electric shock. Even if the statesmen themselves learnt nothing new from it, the very fact that it was *being taught* was still new. For it was not until after it had been grasped as a principle that the historical tendencies achieved their full power of impact, and reached the stage when they could be called ideas.

But the initial application of the new scientific method, and its effect on historical life, were frightful and shattering. A prince must also learn how not to be good—this was the requirement of *necessità*, by which all human life was governed and constrained. But it was quite another matter to decide whether, on the one hand, the moral law should be broken only in the practice of politics, or whether, on the other hand, it was permissible to justify (as from now on became possible, and in fact more and more tended to happen) such an infringement by the plea of an unavoidable 'necessity'. In the first instance the moral law itself had, in its sanctity as a supra-empirical necessity, remained entirely unimpaired. But now this supra-empirical necessity was broken down by an empirical necessity; the force of evil was fighting for a place alongside that of good, and was making out that it was, if not an actual power of good, then at least an indispensable means for obtaining a certain kind of goodness. The forces of sin, which had been basically subdued by the Christian ethic, now won what was fundamentally a partial victory; the devil forced his way into the kingdom of God. There now began that dualism under which modern culture has to suffer: that opposition between supra-empirical and empirical, between absolute and relative standards of value. It was now possible for the modern State, following its own inmost vital impulse, to free itself from all the spiritual fetters that had constrained it; it was possible for it, as an independent power acknowledging no authority outside this world, to effect the admirable accomplishments of rational organization, which would have been unthinkable in the Middle Ages, but were now due to increase from century to century. But it already contained the poison of an inner contradiction, from the very moment it began its ascent. On the one hand religion, morality and law were all

[1] *Klassiker der Politik Bd. 8, Machiavelli, Der Fürst*, etc., Introduction, pp. 32 ff. I was not convinced by Chabod's counter-arguments in '*Archivum Romanicum*'.

absolutely indispensable to it as a foundation for its existence; on the other hand, it started off with the definite intention of injuring these whenever the needs of national self-preservation would require it. But surely (it will be asked) Machiavelli must have felt this contradiction, and the serious consequences it was bound to have?

He was not able to feel it, for the reason that his cast-iron theory of *necessità* concealed it from him, or because (as he believed, at least) the theory of *necessità* resolved the contradiction. The same force which impelled princes to refrain from being good under certain circumstances, also impelled men to behave morally; for it is only from necessity that men perform good actions (*Principe*, ch. 23). Necessity was therefore the spear which at the same time both wounded and healed. It was the causal mechanism which, provided that *virtù* existed in the State, saw to it that the necessary morality and religion were present, and that any failings in that respect were made good. Thus the theory of the struggle between *virtù* and *fortuna*, and the theory of *necessità*, worked together very closely to justify the prince in the use of underhand measures, and to prevent this from being harmful in his opinion.

For all the time Machiavelli held firmly to the absolute validity of religion, morality and law. Even in the most evil and notorious chapter of the *Principe*, Chapter 18, which justifies breach of contract, and declares that a prince (and especially a new prince), for the purpose of maintaining the State, 'is often obliged (*necessitato*) to act without loyalty, without mercy, without humanity, and without religion'—even in this chapter he still emphasizes that a prince, when he *can*, should not leave the path of morality, but only that he should, in case of necessity (when *necessitato*), also know how to tread the path of evil. Bad indeed was the infamous advice which he gives here: that it is not necessary for the prince to possess all the good moral qualities of loyalty, sincerity, etc., but that he must always appear to have them, because the former case, in which they would always be exercised, would be harmful, but the latter case where he appeared to have them would be useful. With this he helped to make any hypocritical scoundrel secure on a throne. It would throughout have been perfectly in keeping with his purposes and with the main line of his thought, to demand from the prince himself a certain inner moral restraint, even if it were united with the power to take upon himself, in a case of necessity of State, the entire conflict between State-interest and individual morality, and thus make a tragic sacrifice. But perhaps this kind of solution to the problem (one which Frederick the Great was to give later on) was still entirely alien to the intellectual climate of the period and to Machiavelli's own way of thought. The ability to think in terms of inner conflicts, violations and tragic problems, presupposes a more modern and sophisticated mentality, which perhaps only began with Shakespeare. It was in the spirit

of the time to delight in tracing precise and rectilinear paths; and in opposition to the straight path of Christian morality Machiavelli laid down another path, just as straight in its own way, a path which was directed exclusively towards the goal of what was useful for the State. He then proceeded, with a pleasure which was characteristic of him, to draw from it the most extreme consequences.

But was it then, one cannot help challenging him once more—was it then really the well-being of the State, which he had in mind when he wrote the *Principe*? Or was it merely a breviary for the Medicis, whose favour he needed and to whom he dedicated the book, in order to found for himself a new principality by recommending the methods of the frightful Cesar Borgia? We have tried to prove elsewhere [1] that this interpretation is much too narrow. The personal and contemporary political motives which induced him to write the book are undeniable; but from far back there also entered in his entire philosophy of the State, and also his longing to see Italy freed from the Barbarians. Cesar Borgia, with his rational exercise of cruelty and bad faith, must certainly have offered a model for the practical methods of power politics in the situation as it then existed. But the ideal and supreme pattern for the new princes in Italy must have been the great national liberators and founders of States, such as Moses and Cyrus, Theseus and Romulus. The whole book from beginning to end, even including the last chapter (which is sometimes erroneously taken to be an appendix and not an integral part of the book), grew up out of one uniform and fundamental conception, and is built up on the great theme of the struggle between *virtù* and *fortuna*.

It is certainly true that, as regards its technical chapters, the *Principe* can easily arouse the feeling that Machiavelli is only watching out for the personal advantage of the prince. In this respect Machiavelli yielded to his passion for one-sided emphasis and excessive subtlety in dealing with the *thema probandum* of the moment. But if his work is taken together with the *Discorsi* and the other writings and treated as a whole, then this impression entirely disappears. One sees clearly what is the real central idea in Machiavelli's life: namely, the regeneration of a fallen people by means of the *virtù* of a tyrant, and by means of the levering power of all the measures dictated by *necessità*.

This is what is peculiar to Machiavelli, and at the same time constitutes the historical power of his work—the fact that he, the first person to discover the real nature of *raison d'état*, did actually suceed in taking the measure of all the heights and depths to which it led on. He knew its depths, which lead down to the bestial element in Man—'thus it is necessary for a prince, that he should have a proper understanding of how to make use of the brute as well as the man' (*Principe*,

[1] In the Introduction to vol. 8 of *Klassiker der Politik* already referred to.

ch. 18). He could in the process, as we already saw, when drawn on by his deep-rooted passion for analysis, sink much more deeply into the filth of bestiality than was strictly necessary in order to make a proper use of that bestiality. He knew also that a case of necessity of State (where perhaps a republic which is threatened by dangerous neighbours might be obliged to adopt a policy of conquest) did not represent merely a simple factual necessity, but contained in addition certain elements of power-drive and power-appetite—'molestation by others will give rise to the desire and necessity for conquering' (*la voglia e la necessità dello acquistare*, Disc., II, 19).[1] But he despised a mere insensible greed for power, the *brutta cupidità di regnare* (Disc., III, 8), and he always returned once more to the utilitarian middle way of *raison d'état*. Keep your head clear, he advised, so that you only wish for what is attainable; do not become presumptuous after victory, but, if you have a stronger opponent, take care to make peace at an opportune moment (Disc., II, 27). Nor should you exasperate an enemy with threats or insult him in words; threats make him more cautious, while insults will increase his hatred (Disc., II, 26). To draw hatred on oneself without getting any benefit from it, is indiscreet and unwise (Disc., III, 23). Under no circumstances should a system of government be built up on a permanent hatred amongst the people. It would be better even to provoke an attack from the nobles, because there are only a few of them, and they can therefore be more easily subdued; but even here he advocated a rationally balanced procedure, 'to refrain from reducing the nobles to despair and to satisfy the people' (Princ., ch. 19).

Political utilitarianism was also at the same time a policy of relativity. Nowadays, he taught, it is necessary to pay attention to the subject peoples, because the peoples are of more significance than the armies. The Roman emperors, on the other hand, had to accommodate themselves to the soldiers rather than the people, because the soldiers could do more at that time than the people could (Princ., ch. 19). Fortified castles may be useful or not, according to the state of the times; but not to be hated by one's people is better than any fortified castle (Princ., ch. 20). But each thing always has concealed in it some special evil that is peculiar to it (Disc., III, 11); therefore whenever one is acting in accordance with *raison d'état*, one must always be conscious of the spheres of uncertainty, of change, and of two-fold consequences, in which it works. 'No State ought to think that it can adopt a course which is absolutely secure, but it ought to reflect rather that all are doubtful; because it is in the order of things, that one can never avoid an evil without running into another one. Wisdom therefore consists in

[1] Cf. also *Principe*, ch. 3: *È cosa veramente molto naturale et ordinaria desiderare di acquistare, e sempre quando li uomini lo fanno che possano, saranno laudati e non biasimati.*

distinguishing between different qualities of evil, and in accepting the lesser evil as a good' (Princ., ch. 21).

As we have already seen, he adopted a relativist view, when considering the various forms which the State could take. The contrast between the monarchist bias in the *Principe* and the republican tinge of the *Discorsi* is only apparent. The quantity of *virtù*, which existed in a people, was the factor that decided whether a monarchy or a republic was the more suitable. So it was only consistent that, for his disjointed times, he demanded a monarchical despot and took this to be a necessity of State. The fact that the thing he was asking for might cut both ways was perfectly clear to him; he knew quite well that the tool of monarchical power, which with supreme art he was putting into the hands of the prince, could be misused in the interests of a purely personal greed for power. One can understand why he does not proceed to treat this problem in the *Principe*. But in the *Discorsi* he gives it quite openly as his really sincere opinion, that only in a republic can it be ensured that public good will take precedence of private advantage, and thus make it possible for the State to achieve greatness (Disc., II, 2). With the passionate exaggeration into which he sometimes fell, he was capable of laying down, with reference to a city-state ruled by a prince, the following proposition: that what the prince did for his own advantage, would in most cases injure the State, and that what he did for the benefit of the State, would injure him.[1] Yet immediately afterwards he went on to modify his own crude conception, and contrasted the barbaric type of oriental ruler with the pattern of the Western prince; in that, if the latter be of a normal human stamp, then he will have a uniform paternal love for the cities which come under his care, and he will leave their old constitutional arrangements undisturbed. It is also in the essence of Machiavellian *raison d'état*, as one can see, that with regard to the inner life of the State it should still wish to behave in a relatively conservative and considerate manner.[2] But ruthless acts of interference, when they were necessary to protect power against direct threats, were not thereby excluded. Certainly there also appeared on the horizon of his political imagination the wish-fantasy of a great regenerator of fallen States, 'who, either through his own *virtù*, or by means of the *virtù* of a regulation' (i.e. of a general reform), would breathe new life into these States. The practical needs and possibilities of his time, however (and he generally based his calculations on these), did not go beyond the suppression of actual resistance inside the State, i.e. did not

[1] His reference for this is to Xenophon's treatise *de tyrannide*—it is (as shown by Ellinger, *Antike Quellen der Staatslehre Machiavellis, Zeitschr. f.d. ges. Staatswissenschaften Bd.* 44, 40) the dialogue *Hieron*, which has been ascribed to Xenophon.

[2] Cf. the advice in ch. 3 of the *Principe*: 'in newly conquered countries with the same language, the laws and taxes ought not to be changed.'

go beyond a rational and at the same time thorough opposition, by direct and indirect means, to all conspiracies. The aims of the later type of absolutism, with its levelling tendencies, were still completely foreign both to himself and to his time. Machiavellism had certainly opened up the road which led to them, but they themselves had not yet come in sight. It is for this reason that we see no signs in Machiavelli of *raison d'état* taking precedence over statute law, which in the seventeenth century (as we shall see presently) was to constitute the principal importance of *raison d'état*. On the contrary a fundamental respect for the existing laws was part of the very essence of his rational autocracy. 'It is well that princes should know that, in the very hour when they begin to break the laws, and disturb old arrangements and customs under which men have long lived, in that hour they begin to lose the State' (Disc., III, 5).

All this shows that he moved on the ethical heights of a *raison d'état* which within the limits of his time could only have limited aims indeed, but which was capable of a vital consciousness of the good of the community, the *bene comune* of the whole people. And ultimately he was even capable of rising to the highest ethical feeling which is possible for action prompted by *raison d'état*; this sacrifice consists in taking on oneself personal disgrace and shame, if only it offers a means of saving the Fatherland. Occasionally he would express it in the very same breath with his prosaic utilitarianism: 'It will always be difficult to win the masses over to such conclusions as these, which appear to indicate cowardice and defeat, but do in reality signify salvation and gain' (Disc., I, 53). But the heights and depths of his *raison d'état* are united in the most powerful manner by that phrase, which is to be found at the end of his *Discorsi* (III, 41), and which must surely have sounded in the ears of a certain great German statesman during the First World War: that one may save the Fatherland even *con ignominia*. 'When it is a question of saving the Fatherland, one should not stop for a moment to consider whether something is lawful or unlawful, gentle or cruel, laudable or shameful; but, putting aside every other consideration, one ought to follow out to the end whatever resolve will save the life of the State and preserve its freedom.'

* * *

It has been the fate of Machiavelli, as of so many great thinkers, that only one part of his system of thought has been able to influence historical life. It is true that he exerted a powerful and lasting influence through his new method of building politics upon a foundation of experience and history—although even this did not immediately replace the previous scholastic and humanistic methods, but only, through the

course of nearly two centuries, intermingled with the older methods, and was able gradually to supersede them. But his ideal of *virtù* soon faded; because the heathen mood of the Renaissance, from which it had sprung, was not able to survive in the period which followed the *sacco di Roma*. And with that too the ethical aim of his statecraft, the idea of regeneration, paled into insignificance. Attention was indeed paid to his republican ideals, but they were misinterpreted in many ways, as for instance in the opinion which was soon expressed that, by giving a sincere picture of the *Principe* he had wanted to unmask tyranny and give a warning against the danger he was pointing out.[1] But generally speaking he was seen first and foremost as having prepared the poison of autocracy; as such, he was publicly condemned and secretly made use of. As we have seen, Machiavelli is to blame for this himself, on account of his method of isolating in a one-sided manner whatever problem he happens to be dealing with at the moment. The chief thing was, however, that the idea of political regeneration was altogether beyond the capabilities and the wishes of the peoples and the rulers of that time, and hence it fell to the ground. The struggle which was to rage around religious values took up entirely all the higher spiritual power of men; and Machiavelli's ancient heathen idealism of the State was no longer understood by the men of the Counter-Reformation period—not even by the Free-thinkers, who took over the secular spirit of the Renaissance. But they very well understood the ancient heathen realism of his statecraft. And here it is very clearly demonstrated how much can be added to the mere naïvely-functioning forces of life by a spiritual and intellectual shaping. The intellectual formative power, finding Machiavellism already in existence, rendered it far more effective in influence, by making it into a well-reasoned, compact, and elegantly polished system. A plant which had been growing wild and spreading in all directions, and which was very poisonous and at the same time potentially curative in its effects, became to a certain extent cultivated, and thus perfected and its influence greatly multiplied. His theory combined absolutely convincing evidence that political life had always seemed to be of just this character and no other, and had probably always seemed like this, together with the pressure of *necessità* that a prince who does not wish to be ruined must behave like a fox among foxes, *vulpinari cum vulpibus*. And in this *necessità* one could also feel obscurely (it was the sole ethical element in Machiavelli's thought which produced any after-effect) some higher kind of justification for immoral political behaviour in the eyes of the moral conscience. Then the newly-animated Christian conscience of every creed rose up in opposition to this; and so there began that spiritual and intellectual struggle around the subject of

[1] This was the opinion already in the Giunta Edition of the *Principe* in 1532; Burd in the introduction to his edition (1891), p. 36.

Machiavellism, which we are going to describe. Later on we shall have to return once more to Machiavelli, when our task will be to consider the subsequent development of certain fertile conceptions, contained in his theory of *raison d'état*; these conceptions pointed forward to a more individualizing treatment of the State in historical and political thinking. It only remains now for us to give the most important concrete facts in connection with the spread of his theory, and with the condensing of it into the catchphrase *ragione di stato*.

The *Principe* was first circulated in manuscript. It was first put into print by Blado in Rome in 1532. This was followed by countless reprints.[1] In 1531 Blado also prepared the first edition of the *Discorsi*, which was likewise reprinted over and over again. In 1552 the first published *Index librorum prohibitorum* from Rome placed the entire writings of Machiavelli on its list. But already in the following year there appeared at Basle the first Latin translation of the *Principe*. It was impossible to prevent his books from spreading.

The catchphrase of *ragione di stato* must have begun to take on very gradually, beginning in the third decade of the 16th century. Guicciardini, who was so close in spirit to Machiavelli, had already spoken once of the *ragione e uso degli stati*; but he used the phrase in such a way that it was doubtful whether he was already using it to apply to a distinct concept.[2] It has therefore been believed that the first evidence of a distinct theory of *ragione di stato* is to be found in an anonymous book of memoirs, dating from 1525. This is a mistake.[3] Therefore, until

[1] Cf. Gerber, *Niccolò Machiavelli, die Handschriften, Ausgaben und Übersetzungen seiner Werke*, 1912.

[2] In a dialogue on the constitution of Florence (between 1523 and 1527), *Opere inedite*, 2, 212; cf. Barkhausen, *Fr. Guicciardinis politische Theorien usw.*, 1908, p. 89. Guicciardini here recommended that all the Pisan prisoners should be killed, in order to weaken the city. Though this might not be a Christian idea, it was required by *ragione e uso degli stati*.

[3] On pp. 529–33 of his *Secrets d'Etat de Venise* (1884), Lamansky published an anonymous and undated piece, which came from a manuscript of the seventeenth or eighteenth century belonging to Barozzi, the director of a Venetian museum; the anonymous piece is entitled *Che si possa dai principi insidiare alla vita degli adherenti dei nemici loro*. In connection with a supposed plot on the part of the Marchese Pescara (who died in 1525), a general of Charles V, on the life of Duke Ercole of Ferrara, a supporter of the King of France, the question is discussed of whether and to what extent there was any foundation to the Duke's complaint about this plot. It is asserted in the process that *la prudenza politica o ragione di stato, che noi vogliamo chiamarla* did mean that a ruler should set the preservation or aggrandisement of his *stato* before anything else, *e di qua nasce, che tutto quello, che si opera con quello fine, si dice ragione di stato etc. Questa prudenza però, non obligata ad altro, che al servitio, alla sicurtà et alla perpetuatione del dominare, interpreta le leggi, altera le consuetudini, muta i costumi e quasi arbitra dispone*, etc. Pescara's plot was not to be condemned, and individual plots of this kind were not so bad or so destructive as war, which caused the death of many innocent persons. The only ground for complaint which Duke Ercole had was that Pescara, who was an Italian and a

further evidence is forthcoming, we are bound to accept the view (which was already shared by Italian writers about *ragione di stato* in the seventeenth century [1]) that the archbishop and humanist Giovanni della Casa, about the middle of the sixteenth century, was the first to testify with any certainty to its existence as a distinct catchphrase.

It is instructive to see in what connection it occurred, and the comments he had to make on the subject. In 1547 Piacenza had fallen into the hands of the Emperor, who held on to it and refused to give it back to his son-in-law, Duke Octavio Farnese of Parma. So it occurred that in one of the following years della Casa (who was in Venice as papal nuntius in the service of Pope Paul III, the grandfather of Duke Octavio) requested the Emperor Charles V, in a very skilfully composed address, to hand back Piacenza.[2] Della Casa said that, although one might claim it would be contrary to the *ragione degli stati* to do so, yet this opinion was in no way Christian or humane. It would be as if fairness and honour were only rough workaday clothes which one could not wear on grand occasions. It was precisely in the important questions of life that reasonableness ought to prevail. Whoever was acting contrary to it, particularly in affairs of State, was acting against Nature and against God. If the reason which guided States was only to serve

relative, had behaved in so unchivalrous a manner towards him. If this writing was contemporary, as Platzhoff (*Theorie von der Mordbefugnis der Obrigkeit im 16. Jahrhundert*, p. 31) supposes, or in any case originated at the very latest in 1525 among the retinue of Pescara, then it would constitute for us the first important evidence of a complete theory of *ragione di stato*. But more than twenty years intervene before the next mention of *ragione di stato*, and further decades elapsed before the theoretical discussion of *ragione di stato* was initiated by Botero in 1589. I have the definite impression that the account presupposes this theoretical treatment. The relationship of *ragione di stato* to positive law, the conception of it as *arbitra*, the efforts to define it precisely, the distinction and juxtaposition of a *ragione di guerra e di stato*, etc., are different traits which recur over and over again in the literature of *ragione di stato* after Ammirato (for whom, see ch. 6). It seems to me highly improbable that in 1525 a thinker would have been acquainted with all the problems which were modern in 1600. The account is also lacking in direct contemporary atmosphere. In general, it bears a more literary character. It treats the fall of Pescara as a text-book example, in the same manner as Paruta and Boccalini (who also dealt with the fall of Pescara on one occasion) were afterwards fond of taking instances from the past and discoursing on them as text-book cases. And lastly, the introduction to the account indicates that the author had already been in the habit of speaking on this subject occasionally—in short, it is obviously a fragment taken from a longer political treatise written by one of the practically innumerable political authors who wrote about statecraft around 1600.—Moreover nothing has become known from any other source about a plot by Pescara against Duke Ercole. M. Brosch, who had a thorough knowledge of the period, and on whom Platzhoff relied, assumed a sceptical attitude towards the anonymous author.

[1] Chiaramonti, *Della ragione di stato*, 1635, p. 10. Cf. Ferrari, *Hist. de la raison d'état*, p. vi.

[2] Edition of the *Opere della Casa's* of 1707, vol. 2, 125 ff.

purposes which were useful and profitable, and was to despise every other law, where then would be the difference between tyrants and kings, between men and beasts? It was all very well to create this title of *Utile ragion di stato*. But in doing so one created two kinds of reason—one of them crooked, false and unbridled, good for any robbery and infamy, which was given the name of *Ragion di stato* and entrusted with the government of States; the other plain, straightforward and steadfast, which had been entirely ousted from the business of ruling States, and restricted to the mere discharge of judicial matters. And now he sought to put the Emperor in a frame of mind where he would find it impossible to act in accordance with this abominable doctrine.

It is true of course that, in the quarrel over Piacenza between Emperor and Pope, both sides used against each other all the arts of Machiavellian politics. In 1547 Pier Luigi Farnese, the father of Octavio, was murdered on the instigation of the imperial Governor of Milan. But that gave rise to a vengeful desire among the Farnese family to use the most evil measures against the Emperor. In the very well composed address this was concealed by the delicate and skilful *raison d'état* of the papal diplomat. But the whole rift, which had appeared between men's thoughts and their actions, could be glimpsed in the obscure background of his words.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FIRST OPPONENTS OF MACHIAVELLISM IN FRANCE: GENTILLET AND BODIN

ONE could attempt to link up the history of Machiavellism with the history of the literary battle which was fought around Machiavelli. This would be to follow once again the trail which was already broken in the eighteenth century by Johann Friedrich Christ, with his remarkable book on Machiavelli (*De Nicolao Machiavello libri tres*, Halle, 1731). The same ground was afterwards covered by R. v. Mohl in the third volume of his *Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften*, by Villari in the second volume of his work on Machiavelli, and by Burd in his edition of the *Principe* (1891). But in the process one would have to cross swords with a whole host of third- and fourth-rate minds. Such a history of the historical verdict pronounced on Machiavelli would certainly constitute a fragment of universal history amid the flux of historical and political thought. But it would be tied too closely to the special questions raised by the personality of Machiavelli himself; and it would have to analyse, often painfully and minutely, the confused and artificial interpretations of earlier centuries. It will be more fruitful to separate the investigation from the personality of Machiavelli, and instead to trace the effects of the spirit which appears in his writings.

Machiavelli's theory was a sword which was plunged into the flank of the body politic of Western humanity, causing it to shriek and rear up. This was bound to happen; for not only had genuine moral feeling been seriously wounded, but death had also been threatened to the Christian views of all churches and sects, and therefore to the strongest bond uniting men and nations, the highest spiritual power that reigned over them. Of course one should not fail to notice that (as Ernst Troeltsch has shown in his *Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen*) religious morality, not only in the old Catholic Church, but also in the new Protestant religion, did provide certain outlets and scope for a secular type of

statecraft. Catholic morality did this by recognizing a Natural Law which had a certain relative value, and therefore recognizing too the existence of genuine duties and obligations in this world; Luther did so by means of his theory of official morality, which placed in the hand of the authorities a most powerful weapon for use against evil-doers; while Calvin did so by means of the spirit he diffused of rational purposiveness, and the need for disciplining the sensual impulses. But these spheres of action, within which the politician was permitted to move more freely, were narrowly restricted and bound to remain so, because in the last resort all political action was intended to serve the highest religious aims. And now this state of subjection was very seriously threatened by Machiavellism.

Still other vital forces ranged themselves against it, with an obscure instinctivity. For basically, if Machiavellism was to hold sway over the full compass of national life without any restriction, then every existing condition, every right and every other vital interest would be called in question. The thought inherent in it, that the achievement of political purposes could if necessary overstep any bounds, had the appearance of a corrosive poison. Even those who were already acting more or less consciously in a Machiavellian manner, did not want it to happen that everyone else should act and think in this way. Either they wanted the two-edged doctrine to remain a secret amongst the few people who felt justified in using it; or else they wanted it to take a less harmful and objectionable form, so that under its protection they themselves would be able to keep their conscience clear, while at the same time sparing the conscience of the public and preserving universal morality.

Thus there developed two different methods of combating Machiavellism. There were those who fought it wholeheartedly as an evil enemy. And there were others who made a great show of fighting it, but at the same time borrowed from it freely. This is only a very rough and crude distinction between the types. For the multiplicity of motives and vital forces, which were concerned in the matter, was quite extraordinary. The nature of the problem was such as to stir to the very depths anyone who occupied himself with it seriously.

And every responsible statesman was henceforth faced with the question of whether, and to what extent, he was going to apply the theories of Machiavelli. The wealth of examples, with which one could illustrate the history of this problem, is therefore incalculable. We have decided therefore to select those figures who offer an example of a specially rich and obvious mixture of motives. Those that will interest us most will be the thinkers and politicians, in whom Machiavellism and Anti-machiavellism touch closely upon one another. For, as they are themselves divided, they mirror that tragic duality which came into historical life through the medium of Machiavellism—that indivisible

and fateful combination of poison and curative power, which it contained. But we shall also select carefully a limited number of the more straightforward minds, who combated Machiavellism with a simple and undivided attitude, in so far as these are characteristic of the background. All these individual cases then, picked out from the various centuries, will serve as symbols of a great historical complex process, of which the force and significance can scarcely be overestimated.

Our chosen path leads us first to France at the time of the Religious Wars, where in 1576 the Huguenot, Innocent Gentillet, published anonymously the book: *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner et maintenir en bonne paix un Royaume ou autre Principauté, divisez en trois parties: a savoir, du Conseil, de la Religion et Police que doit tenir un Prince. Contre Nicolas Machiavel Florentin.* He dedicated it to the Duke François d'Alençon, the youngest of the four sons of Henry II and Catherine de Medici; the three elder brothers, Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III, all ascended the throne one after another in turn, and were overtaken by misfortune. François d'Alençon was not indeed a Huguenot himself, but he was a political opponent of his mother and ambitious enough to assume the leadership of the insurgent Netherlands, when this was offered to him five years later. Gentillet hoped and wished that this man, who was heir to the throne at the time, would put an end to the recent foreign tyranny which had existed in France for more than fifteen years, and would restore the good old French way of ruling. By foreign tyranny, however, he meant the rule in France of Italians and italianized Frenchmen, hence Catherine de Medici and her court and the new vicious doctrines of Machiavelli, which they had applied and circulated and which were completely corrupting the healthy French nation. It was only after the death of Henry II in 1559 that Machiavelli's name and renown had become known in France, and it was only since then that the business of government was carried on here *à l'Italienne* or *à la Florentine*. It was notorious that the books of Machiavelli had been as frequently in the hands of the courtiers, as a breviary is in those of a village priest. The author of the Latin translation of Gentillet's work, which appeared in 1577, directly accused Queen Catherine of being the devil's chosen instrument for spreading the poison of Machiavelli, in France.[1]

Like the controversial writings of the Huguenot monarchomachs, which were produced in the same years, the book is affected throughout by the spiritual upheavals of the Civil and Religious Wars, when son fought against father, and brother against brother. It is the intellectual product of anger at the Massacre of St. Bartholemew in 1572, the

[1] It was he, and not Gentillet himself (as has been assumed on the basis of the unproven but constantly recopied quotation from Christ, *De N. Machiavello*, 1731, p. 33), who made this assertion; this is shown by the dedicatory epistle of 1577.

ultimate cause of which was found by Gentillet in the theory of Machiavelli.[1] He was not completely right in this, but at the same time not completely wrong. It is entirely uncertain whether Catherine de Medici had concerned herself with Machiavelli before 1572, or not.[2] In any case, her political views, which were so strongly tinged with petty feminine passion and weakness, in no way corresponded to the ideal of austere and consistent rationality, which Machiavelli had set up for princes. But in the native land where she had been born and brought up, she had caught the same disease which infected Machiavelli, and she had no scruples about believing that a prince possessed the authority to kill. The Massacre of St. Bartholemew had not indeed been premeditated by her; she had arranged it because her anxiety about the influence threatening her son, King Charles IX, had suddenly been quickened. However, it was not solely a feminine urge for rule and revenge that drove her on. She was quite unaffected by religious fanaticism, but in the person of Coligny, who was beginning to win over the young king, she was fighting against an entire political system, which was attempting to force France into completely new and hazardous courses of action. The mean personal motive may perhaps have predominated in her; but it was inseparably mingled with the obscurely compelling motives of *raison d'état*. It was one of the most terrible examples of the unhappy combination that could exist between the principle of the pure assertion of national power and all the lower elemental forces.

The adversary, astonished and angered by such a spectacle, is not usually capable of distinguishing objectively, in such cases, between the respective parts which *raison d'état* and elemental passion are playing in the matter; his cry of complaint is usually a single one, attributing the deed to only one sinful motive. Now it is remarkable that Gentillet attributed the responsibility for the deed and for the general misery of the Civil War—not to religious fanaticism, though as a Huguenot this would have been natural in him; he attributed it instead to the atheistical and amoral spirit of Machiavellism. Machiavelli (he proceeded to declare [3]) recommended that one should sow dissension amongst one's subjects. Whence then had sprung all the misfortune of France, if not from the dissension between Catholics and Huguenots, which foreigners

[1] See Rathéry, *Influence de l'Italie sur les lettres françaises* (1853), pp. 129 ff., for further evidence about the restrictedly nativist common view, which considered that the good old French manner had been spoiled for us by the bad Italian influence, and especially by Machiavelli.

[2] Platzhoff, *Die Theorien von der Mordbefugnis der Obrigkeit im 16. Jahrhundert*, p. 62 f.; Jordan, *N. Machiavelli und Katharina von Medici*, *Histor. Vierteljahrsschr.*, 6, 339 ff. (whose conception is however inadequate in many ways), and van Dyke in the *Histor. Vierteljahrsschrift*, 18, 38.

[3] P. 542, cf. p. 534.

had sown amongst us? It was not the religious difference that one should blame, for that could have been handled by means of disputations and conferences. If the truth were told, the Catholics who agreed with Machiavelli were not even really catholic; they were atheists, who cared no more for God or Devil than their master did. Now was it not perhaps the case that this Huguenot, in trying to minimize the clarity and significance of the religious antagonism,[1] was himself unconsciously acting in accordance with the precepts of political opportunism? For since his party formed no more than a weak minority in the nation, it could only hope to maintain itself, if it could secure the confidence and favour of the moderate Catholics, who were united in the party of the 'Politiques'. This is indicated by the dedication of the book to Duke François d'Alençon. And in fact the year 1576, in which the book appeared, was a year in which contact between the 'Politiques' and the Huguenots was especially close.

It is a peculiar thing, which in history is always cropping up with reference to action prompted by *raison d'état*, that one is perfectly capable of allowing oneself to be guided by it involuntarily, and yet also of turning away in anger from its fundamental propositions. For consciousness cannot penetrate very far into the inner plexus of individual life. Gentillet would never have admitted that politics could be an independent province of life, within which purely opportunist behaviour could be natural and organic. He acknowledged only three sources of law, according to which human behaviour could be regulated, and which therefore ought also to regulate national behaviour. These were: firstly, the Law of Nature which, for example, forbade one to follow the advice of Machiavelli and drive the inhabitants out of a conquered country; secondly, the precepts of Christianity; and thirdly, the Statute Law, especially the constitutional law of the individual State. Within the boundaries of these three types of legislation, a place must also be found for what he called the *puissance absolue* of the ruler.[2] Thus the ruler had no power to abolish the Salic Law or the three estates of the realm, or to give away to another State lands which were part of his inheritance. In other ways, however, he was disposed to interpret the *puissance absolue* fairly widely, and he accorded the ruler the right to lead his subjects to war and raise taxes without their consent. But he believed that the ruler would do better in this respect, if he generally acted in accordance with what Gentillet called *puissance civile*, which was limited by what was reasonable, just and fair. We may add that he considered the power of the ruler had originally been conferred on him by the people; so that we have before us what is, on

[1] On this point, cf. specially pp. 149 ff.: both the Catholic and the reformed religion had to count as Christian; the difference was only on a few points.

[2] Cf. pp. 47 ff.

the whole, an inconsistent and incomplete attempt to acknowledge indeed the absolutist tendency of the French kingdom, while at the same time limiting it by means of popular rights and influences. The free exercise of power, however, which was desired by Machiavellism, was an abomination to him.

If one were going to measure the importance of Gentillet's polemic against Machiavelli solely on the actual strength of his arguments, then it would have very little value. His attack was clumsy, garrulous and full of misconceptions. He knew only the *Principe* and the *Discorsi*. From these he took a whole string of propositions out of context, in order to impale them singly; in doing so, he frequently gave them a general sense which they did not have, and then proceeded to refute them, according to the clumsy usage of the time, with a ponderous display of authoritative opinions and gleanings from ancient and modern literature. Christian and natural morality, together with statute law, seemed to him the sole standard of judgment with reference to political affairs. All power relationships were interpreted as ethical relationships, all discrepancies between ethical dogma and the real world were covered by such aphorisms as: Honesty is the best policy; a cruel tyrant never rules for very long; God never lets treachery go unpunished, and usually He punishes it in this world. Machiavelli's opinion, that it is better for the ruler to be feared than loved, is refuted by him with the trivial observation that nothing is easier than to achieve both, and to be feared and loved at the same time. And in reference to Machiavelli's shrewd advice, that the ruler who has a man killed should let the inheritance go to the children, he comments: Any upright man will always prize honour and life more highly than possessions.[1]

This judgment, however, does give us a glimpse of just what it is that makes Gentillet's attack on Machiavelli historically important, in spite of the weakness and mannered unreality of his arguments. It is a case of a clash between two living elements, like fire and water. It was not merely the pious Huguenot in him that took offence; it was first and foremost the Frenchman in him, chivalrous in thought and deed, who suddenly realized that his whole world and way of life were threatened; that morality, honour, the interests of his class, and all peaceful and secure enjoyment of the old rights and privileges were no longer safe, if the State was to be ruled only by the diabolically cold calculation of princely advantage. Nor must one forget that earlier still, at the beginning of the 'sixties, the Huguenot movement had already entered into alliance with the aristocratic interests. Now the contrast was made less plain by the fact that even in the opposing Catholic camp of the League the aristocratic principle was very alive, and this introduced an element of considerable insecurity and disunion into the relationship

[1] P. 383.

between the Crown and both of the parties. The Crown was, as the fate of Catherine de Medici and her sons indicates, essentially far too weak and too dependent on the factions and parties, to be capable of restoring a strong absolutism on the lines pointed out by Machiavelli. But the tendency in that direction continued to exist all through the bloodshed and confusion of this year; and it was from a deep historical instinct that the Huguenot monarchomachs, Hotman and Du Plessis Mornay, carried on their furious campaign against the idea of French absolutism. And Gentillet, in spite of the concessions he made to the *puissance absolue* of the ruler, can be counted as an ally of theirs. Whilst he was defending, with his naïve and fresh feeling for life, the world of aristocracy and the estates of the realm, he sensed in the process with an equally deep instinct that Machiavellism was their most dangerous enemy.

For when Machiavelli explained that unlimited power for the king was the sole means of controlling a high degree of corruption in men (Disc., I, 55), it was precisely the noble landed proprietors of Naples, the Papal States, Romagna and Lombardy, that he singled out as the worst enemies of this sound political condition. Gentillet comments on this, that it might be true for Italy, but for the countries on this side of the mountains it was quite certainly not. For, in France and her neighbouring countries, it was the nobility that maintained the law with a strong hand, and secured obedience to it. It could only be dangerous for a political arrangement such as Machiavelli had in mind, namely for a despotism. For the French barons had always strongly resisted it, to the great vexation of the Machiavellians who had now come into the country. Gentillet rebelled against Machiavelli's verdict (Disc. 3, 1) that France would have come to grief, if it had not been for the pressure exerted by the Parlement against the nobility. For France had been just as flourishing, if not more so, and better governed, in the days before there were any Parlements. What was the reason, he asked, for the many new courts of justice and judges in France? The more judges there are, the more law-suits and conflict. Nor should the ruler establish any great State exchequer, for by doing so he only creates a temptation which will attract enemies and give rise to conflict. The true wealth of a ruler, which he can never lose, is the wealth of his subjects.[1] One can see that he is continually coming up against the whole course of development of real monarchical power, and everywhere he sees it bolstered up by the ideas of Machiavelli. Against a foreign policy of power, war and conquest, conducted by the ruler on Machiavellian lines, Gentillet was able to trot out all the moral and religious platitudes with which he was so lavish. He stopped only to make one characteristic confession.[2] So long as wars were really carried on

[1] Cf. pp. 633 ff. and 564 ff. [2] P. 267.

abroad against foreigners, they were perhaps not so bad, for that would always ensure that experienced troops were available in case of need. And particular attention should be paid to this when the subjects, as was the case with the French nation, were naturally of a warlike disposition, and would tend otherwise to fight amongst themselves. Foreign wars, then, were a safety-valve to prevent civil war—a similar idea had appeared in Coligny's political programme, which had perished with the Massacre of St. Bartholemew. Did this mean perhaps that Gentillet was making one more unwilling concession to the spirit of *raison d'état*? We can guess at one other possible historical motive—the very same from which his strongest antipathy towards Machiavellism proceeded. This was his chivalrous French blood again, his passion for the military profession, which he was unwilling to let go, even if at the same time he wished that the altogether too pugnacious French nobility could have a little more feeling for the sciences and a little less pride in the purity of their own pedigree. But humanist postulates, such as these, in no way altered his basic nature. Through and through, it was still that of the mediaeval man who, in the fresh sensuous enjoyment of his traditional and privileged existence, is easily able to bear, even with a devoted pleasure, the yoke of clerical and religious power; but the new yoke of an absolutist State, which Machiavellism threatens to impose on him, he will resist with obstinate anger. Neither the Christian in him, nor the knight, wanted to have anything to do with the cold monster of *raison d'état*.

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In the same year 1576 in which Gentillet published his book, a greater countryman of his, Jean Bodin, came forward with the first French edition of his work on the subject of the State. This appears to be, as already happened with Machiavelli, the fruitful result of great political upheavals. This same world of French society, filled with civil war and struggles for State power, produced simultaneously two quite different replies to Machiavelli; one of them sprang from the past, and the other from the future that was now coming into existence.

In Gentillet it was the old vital forces that protested against the poison contained in the modern State which was now springing up. Was it not conceivable to combat this from the standpoint of the modern State itself? Was it not possible to accept firmly all the constructive and creative forces that lay in the idea of *raison d'état*, while at the same time purging it of all its elements of corruption and decomposition? Then indeed one would have to approach the problem quite differently from Machiavelli. One ought not to take the requirements of power as one's starting-point; for then one would continually be drawn into the

maelstrom of actual life, and so into those motives of political behaviour which induce one to infringe morality and law; one could indeed use logic to reduce the power of these motives, but it would prove inadequate for the task, and the motives themselves could not simply be eliminated. One would have to start, rather, from a fundamental idea of law, and proceed from there to try and grasp the essential character of the modern State. Once its *legality* had been recognized and secured in its entirety, then by this means one could also free it from the fetters of the mediaeval world and of feudal society. Once it was established independently, alive and autonomous, as it would have to be, then it could perhaps also (because it was a constitutional State) be made immune from the dangerous influence that Machiavellism was likely to have on law. It is the merit of Jean Bodin to have made this attempt deliberately, and to have carried it out with great intellectual power and very important historical consequences. The full historical importance of his achievement cannot be seen clearly, until one contrasts it with that of Machiavelli. It is interesting to observe how these two most important pioneers of the idea of the modern State each arrived at it by entirely different paths.

Bodin belonged to the party of the *Politiques*, the real advocates of a modern *raison d'état* in France at the time of the Civil Wars; it wanted to free the interests of the State from the dominion of the Church and from sectarian passions. To hand the State back to itself—that was the tendency which Bodin was assisting by strictly juridical means. He established the legal characteristics of supreme State power, and in the process discovered the epoch-making idea of Sovereignty; this had already been suspected by others before him, but had never been seen with clarity and creative richness of content. It is the *puissance absolue et perpétuelle d'une République* or, as it is called in the Latin edition, *Summa in cives ac subditos legibusque soluta potestas*. A further definition is *La souveraineté n'est limitée, ni en puissance, ni en charge ni à certain temps*. (*Majestas vero nec a majore protestate nec legibus ullis nec tempore definitur*.) It is therefore the supreme authority over the subjects, independent of all other powers, permanent, not resting on any mandate, but unique and absolved from the laws.

Bodin did not distinguish the question of what is the supreme authority *within* the State from the question of what is the supreme authority *of* the State.[1] The special problems, which are produced by this, lie outside our terms of reference. But this mingling of the two questions is characteristic of the tendency of the time towards a more concrete type of thought, which had not yet succeeded in separating the spiritual entity of the State from the organs which represented it. Machiavelli had been even less capable of doing it than Bodin was. They

[1] Cf. Jellinek, *Allg. Staatslehre*[3], 443.

both fixed their gaze chiefly on the personal representatives of State authority. Both felt that the times were desperately sick, and were in deep need of a doctor who would cure them by wielding unlimited power. The further development of their thought certainly helped to create the modern State and the idea of the State as having a spiritual nature of its own; but their immediate purpose was the founding of a monarchical absolutism, which would act as a remedy. When Bodin took the old, much disputed, Roman proposition of *Princeps legibus solutus est*, and placed it in the context of his new conception of sovereignty, he gave it a new impetus, which would have pleased even Machiavelli. It is not only reasonable, but also necessary, he said (making use of an ancient image), that the laws should be just as dependent on the discretion of the ruler, as a rudder is on that of a helmsman; for the rudder would be quite useless, if it could not be moved this way and that, with every change in the sky or in the situation.[1] In saying this, Bodin also implied a central tenet of *raison d'état*, the juxtaposition and entanglement of freedom and obligation: freedom in the choice of means, obligation to the goal of State welfare, and moreover both obligation and independence with reference to the changing conditions of the environment. For monarchy (which lay closest to his heart) this entailed the following consequence: that the ruler ought not to be restricted by his subjects possessing the right to share in the government. 'If kings were to be bound by the edicts of assemblies and plebiscites, then their power and their royal title would be worth nothing.' [2] But he considered it was reconcilable with sovereignty to concede to the subjects the right to grant supplies, as it was enjoyed by the English Parliament. But according to his opinion, this right had absolutely no binding force for a real king. 'If the necessity of State is pressing, and does not permit of committees being called, then there is no need to wait for the agreement of the people; for after all their well-being depends, first on the mercy of God Everlasting, and secondly on the wisdom of their ruler.' [3] So here too we come across the conception of a rational necessity of State being permitted to break with custom.

What was special about this theory of Bodin's, and what must have increased its power to convince men and enlist their sympathies in times to come, was this: it was not built up solely round the aims of the welfare of State and nation, for this will always retain some indecisive quality which is at the mercy of subjective interpretation. On the contrary, his

[1] Book I, ch. 8 (p. 144 in the Latin edition of 1601, which I used). Socrates and Plato had already made use of the image of helmsman for the ruler of the State, to whom obedience was due as sole authority. Kaerst, *Studien zur Entwicklung der Monarchie im Altertum*, p. 27.

[2] P. 140. [3] P. 142; cf. also Hancke, *Bodin*, p. 82 f.

theory was strengthened with legal and logical arguments. In one passage he records that it is in the nature of sovereignty to owe no allegiance to any power, therefore not even to the laws; and that it is not possible for anyone to create obligations for himself by means of the laws he makes.[1] And elsewhere, too, he makes it part of the nature of sovereignty, that it should be indivisible. 'Just as a kingdom loses its name if it is dismembered and broken up into pieces, so also the rights of majesty will perish if they are shared with the subjects.' [2]

We shall see later [3] that this theory of the indivisibility of sovereignty, because it failed to distinguish the sovereign rights of the State from the sovereign rights of its supreme instrument, was capable of leading to false and historically untenable conclusions. It should be clearly recognized that it is not in itself a merely theoretical question. It sprang from the need which had arisen in modern (and, particularly, in contemporary French) national life, to weld firmly together again and unite inseparably the various parts of State authority, which had been split apart in the course of mediaeval development, and more recently through the explosive effect of the Civil Wars. Without a united and indivisible State Will, there could be no united *raison d'état*.

Although, on account of the completely juridical construction of Bodin's system, the idea of *raison d'état* could not be dominant, it still stands out in the background as a central idea which for him was self-evident. This is shown chiefly by the fact that he was already weakening the strong influence which was exerted over all theorizing about the State by the question of what was the best form of the State. All thought prompted by *raison d'état* would inevitably lead away from that and, if consistently carried out, would lead finally to the recognition that there is not one best form of the State; there are only individually different States, each of which has to live its own life according to its own special conditions and not in accordance with general norms. Bodin, indeed, had not as yet drawn these conclusions, and had not yet entirely given up the search for the ideal form of the State. But it was already yielding precedence in his mind to the more pressing and fruitful inquiry into the individual nature of the State. 'This must be the first law of States which are to be ruled well and wisely: to observe their condition, the force and nature of each, and the causes of any ailments affecting them. . . . It is not sufficient to recognize which is the best form of the State, if one is incapable of valuing the condition of a State, which one is not in a position to alter. When there is a danger that, instead of reforming a State, one will merely precipitate its downfall, then it is better to preserve the worst conceivable State, rather than have no State at all; just as, if a man is seriously ill, it is better to keep

[1] P. 134, cf. Hancke, p. 26.
[2] Book I, ch. 10, p. 234.
[3] In the chapter on Pufendorf.

him alive at least by means of a suitable regime, than it is to try and cure an incurable illness with a medicine which will destroy his life.'[1] This point of view also applied to the alteration of laws and customs. A serious mistake is made by those who wish to transfer the laws of foreign States to a State which is governed on entirely opposing lines. Even the best law can be ruinous, if by its very novelty it brings the other laws into disrespect. First and foremost one should beware of undermining the well-proven fundamental arrangements of a State, for the sake of some advantage or other which is to be hoped from it. He wanted these to be, if possible, unalterable—but he added immediately afterwards (influenced entirely by the resilient spirit of *raison d'état*, which combines both constancy and change) that this could not be absolutely valid, because the first and supreme law would ever be the Will of the people. 'Therefore no law can ever be so beneficial, that it should not be altered under pressure of necessity.' He corroborated this with the classic example in antiquity of behaviour prompted by *raison d'état*, which is reported by Plato in his life of Lysander (ch. 14). When Theramenes had the lofty walls of Athens pulled down, and heard himself reproached with having destroyed the work of Themistocles, he replied: 'In doing this, I am in no way acting against Themistocles; he built the walls so that the citizens would be safe, and we are now pulling them down for the same reason.' Themistocles and Theramenes were both guided by the same *ratio*, Bodin observes, namely the *salus populi*.

Machiavelli had made the hard pronouncement that a ruler, if he had no alternative, must have the courage to save the State even *con ignominia*. Bodin makes the same demand for a type of resolution, which will overcome any irrational limitations due to a sense of honour and will place success right in the very forefront of statesmanlike conduct. 'Nothing can appear contemptible, which is bound up with the safety of the State.' [2] It was for him self-evident that, if one had the power to resist an enemy one should do it strenuously; but for lesser powers, he saw nothing dishonourable in a tractable accommodation to circumstances and submission to stronger nations, and he considered it mere stupidity to carry on a hopeless and desperate struggle, merely for the sake of honour.[3] And never fight any battle, he said, if the profit to be gained from victory is not greater than the harm that would be caused by defeat. This sense of what was positive and useful, taught him at the same time how indispensable power was to the State. But a boundlessly ambitious policy of power and conquest was rejected by him in the strongest terms. An exemplary ruler like Augustus, he observes, certainly never hesitated to make war when it was necessary, but for the

[1] Book 4, ch. 3 (p. 664 f.). [2] Book V, ch. 5 (p. 891).
[3] The same; in the following, cf. Chauviré, *Bodin*, pp. 279 ff.

rest he conscientiously maintained peace, in so far as it was possible. He condemned a brutal display of power, which drove the defeated nation to despair, and recommended a reasonable, moderate and sparing use of it.[1] All these rational views did not indeed prevent him from having occasional attacks of chauvinism;[2] but in the main his *raison d'état* had a bourgeois and utilitarian connotation, emphasizing the blessings of peace and of the constitutional state.

So far as we can see, Bodin had not got to the point of using the catchphrase *ratio status*, but he had framed the concept of a special *ratio imperandi* or *ratio gubernandi* which (and in his opinion this was something that no one else had yet noticed) had to be kept distinct from the *status*, i.e. from the particular form of the State.[3] For example, a State might be a real monarchy, and yet the administrative principles on which it was run might be democratic (*gubernatio popularis*), owing to an equal distribution of official duties, punishments and rewards in the State. In the same way, it is possible for a State, in which the State power is aristocratic, to be governed either in a democratic or an aristocratic manner, according to the extent to which public offices are filled by the subjects. And in the older Rome, before the *lex Canuleja*, he saw a democratic State which was governed aristocratically in practice (*status popularis, sed aristocratica gubernatione moderatus*). This *ratio gubernandi* or *imperandi* was in no way identical with the more widely embracing concept of *raison d'état* which we have in mind. But it was a characteristic and—from the legal point of view—well-thought-out attempt to make part of it (or a partial effect of it) into a concept; and thus to distinguish the content of State life from the abiding form—where the content was activated by *raison d'état*, while the form of State life was not so activated.

Bodin went even further along this path of seeking an individual view of State life; and he set himself the important and fruitful task of investigating the connection between the form and laws of the State, and the individual nature of the people.[4] He noted with pride, that so far no one writing on the subject of the State had handled this question. But the execution of his project showed that historical thought was not yet supple enough and rich enough for the solution of this problem. He was only able to trace the differences between nations and forms of the State back to fairly crude geographical and climatic differences. But nevertheless it is enough to make him a forerunner of Montesquieu.

But all these views with a tendency towards individualization did not diminish his real wish to find some universal and absolute standards for State life—his wish for a firm legal and moral basis amidst all the fluid

[1] Book V, ch. 6 (p. 908). [2] On this point cf. Chauviré, p. 463.
[3] Book II, ch. 2 (p. 295) and ch. 7 (p. 365). Cf. Hancke, *Bodin*, p. 44.
[4] Book V, ch. 1. (pp. 767 and 771).

and changing problems of the State. This sharply distinguishes him from Machiavelli, who always strove to reach his supreme and absolute goal (the maintenance of *virtù* in the State) through the sole means of a ruthless surrender to the immediate aim of gaining power, and therefore also a surrender to the needs of the moment and of relativism. Machiavelli saw only the vital impulses and laws of the individual States and those in power acting for the States; Bodin saw all these spanned by an eternal and unbreakable connection. It was only thus that he succeeded in freeing the sovereign and self-enclosed Will of the State from the bonds of mediaeval life, in order to subject it to an even higher sovereignty. This was necessary in order to give an absolute and universal legal foundation to his thesis of a sovereign State authority. To the unified and sovereign State Will, there had to correspond a unified and sovereign World Will, which would hold everything firmly together and within bounds. Otherwise without it the sovereign State Will threatened to degenerate into arbitrary action, and thus into a dissolution of all real law. He quoted with heartfelt approval the remark of Seneca: *Caesari cum omnia licent, propter hoc minus licet.* Thus he was groping then towards the belief, which had been handed down from long tradition and was very generally believed, that in the commands of God and of Nature harmonizing together there existed a supreme dual source of all law; these were commands which under all circumstances must be maintained unbroken. This in itself was nothing less than original. But it was peculiar and significant that he combined a new thought with an old one; that he incorporated the sovereign State Will in a sovereign World Will, which only then could take effect as a spiritual power and claim the allegiance of the conscience.

The proposition, therefore, that the ruler is absolved from the laws, in no way signified that he is absolved from *all* laws, 'since all are bound by the divine law, and also by the law of Nature.' He added that the law common to all nations, which did not coincide with natural and divine law (*divisas habet rationes*), was also binding.[1] Yet he laid the principal emphasis on divine and natural law, as constituting the bounds of State Will. 'It is not permissible for the ruler to upset the bounds which God Himself, Whose living and breathing image he is, has established through the everlasting laws of Nature.'[2] Nor may he do what is 'by nature unlawful or disgraceful'. To behave respectably, means to act with a natural moderation. He judged that Aristides was quite right to reject the advice of Themistocles because, although useful, it was disgraceful. First and foremost the ruler must keep faith, and he must conscientiously abide by any agreements he makes, either with his own subjects or with foreigners; he must even keep his word with robbers. 'Sincerity is the sole foundation of thoroughgoing justice. Not

[1] Book I, ch. 8 (p. 132). [2] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

only States, but the whole of human society is held together by it.' Even God himself is bound by His own promises. And since the ruler is the guarantor and avenger of faith and law in the State, that is all the more reason why he must maintain sincerity and the power of belief, even when it brings harm to himself. All the countless instances of broken agreements and broken faith, which he deals with in his section on the Rights of Nations (*De jure feciale*, Bk. 5, ch. 6), were judged by him from a purely legal and moral point of view, and he did not admit here any justification of *raison d'état*.

So, indeed, when he surveyed the policy of Renaissance rulers, he was only able to reconcile his French patriotism with his feeling for justice, by an excessive idealization of a Charles VIII or a Louis XII at the expense of a Maximilian I, and by using the precedents of other rulers and other nations to justify the infamous alliance of Francis I. And in addition he had also to make a few exceptions (founded, to be sure, only on legal and moral considerations) to the absolute rule that agreements should be faithfully kept. It was first of all self-evident that no one needed to keep faith with someone who had broken his oath. But he also excepted any 'disgraceful agreements, which cannot be kept without committing a crime, and cannot be sworn to without godlessness'.[1] And although, out of the various pretexts of *raison d'état*, he occasionally admitted the one that said that the threatened downfall of the State could release one from an agreement, yet he did not fail to add: 'it must then be the case that what you had promised must be, according to the laws of Nature, either unjust or else incapable of execution'. Finally he also appears to say that unclear and ambiguously framed agreements can release one from the obligation to set sincerity above profit.[2]

But however strict might be the legal sense in which he formulated these exceptions—they were nevertheless malleable, and they presented an opportunity for commentators who, consciously or unconsciously, allowed themselves to be guided by the idea of what was profitable to the State. And that remark of his which we have already quoted, saying that nothing could be held disgraceful, if the salvation of the State depended on it, was capable of being carried very much further than he would have liked. The idea of the modern constitutional State struggled to the surface in him with unusual clarity and distinctness, and by means of his theory of sovereignty he succeeded in incorporating into the constitutional State in a model fashion the exigencies of power *within* the State. But when he tried to set legal and moral limits to the

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 928.

[2] P. 933. He praises those, who *fidem omnibus utilitatibus quantaecunque fuerint, anteponi putant oportere, si sublata verborum ambiguitate pacta conventa perspicua minimeque dubia videantur.*

power of the State itself, he was only able to do this by means of idealistic demands, which in the last resort were incapable of blocking up all the bolt-holes of Machiavellism. The mood of the times and of contemporary statesmen was not set on giving precedence to law and honesty over what was profitable. Since the time of Machiavelli, the power-State was a consciously grasped idea and, at the same time also, a historical reality; but the constitutional State had only now through Bodin become a consciously grasped idea. The *homo levissimus ac nequissimus*, as Bodin nicknamed Machiavelli,[1] could not yet be vanquished by that alone.

[1] Book VI, ch. 4, p. 1086; for other harsh judgments by Bodin on Machiavelli, see Baudrillart, *Bodin*, p. 225, and Chauviré, *Bodin*, p. 276.

CHAPTER THREE

BOTERO AND BOCCALINI

THE whole intellectual atmosphere in the transitional period from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century was much more favourable to working on that aspect of the theory of *raison d'état* which was universally valid, than it was to studying the individual differences between the interests of the States in the various countries. This is to be seen from that interesting school of Italian theoreticians of statecraft, of whom the best-known are Botero, Paruta, Ammirato and Boccalini. But it could not fail to happen that even the most generalized theses about statecraft should, merely by the practical use one made of them in applying them to the special situation of one's own time and one's own country, take on the colour of the soil from which they sprang, and thus provide an involuntary self-portrait of the perfectly concrete interests of State and nation.

The statecraft of these Italians was indeed rather specially situated. Under the pressure of the Spanish rule in Milan and Naples, they were not quite free, and yet at the same time not completely bound. In Venice, Florence and Rome they had not entirely forgotten the period of the former freedom of Italy before the invasion of the foreigners. They longed to have this freedom back, but they saw no possibility of its swift return; and they had to resign themselves with greater or less adaptability to the existing power relationships. They could at least rejoice when, with the end of the Civil Wars in France and the establishing of the kingdom of Henry IV, there grew up a strong European counterpoise to the power of Spain. So they were fully conscious how privileged they were to enjoy the remains of political independence, which was still left to the small Italian States, particularly the Republic of Venice, a possession which had been much admired and was still cherished with a national pride. In Venice one had a perfect example of a State, where a shrewd sagacity was made to compensate for what was lacking in the physical bases of power; this was achieved by means of a rational and consistently thought-out system, where the methods of government were elastic in one place and rigid in another. It had the appearance of

a triumph of the intellect over nature, over crude force. Italian political thought could learn much from the *raison d'état* of this State—which never swung the hammer of power without first finding an absolutely solid anvil for it—just as it learnt from Machiavelli's warning, to play the fox if the role of the lion was out of reach. And one was not insusceptible to the benefits of the long peace, which had been enjoyed in Italy since the establishing of Spanish power. They comforted themselves by saying that this had been assisted too by their own skilfully managed policy of maintaining a balance of power (especially on the part of Venice), and by their having abandoned a bolder forward policy of adventure. This was the opinion of the shrewd and eminent Venetian Paruta (1540–98), whose *Discorsi politici* appeared in 1599, shortly after his death. He discussed in detail the question whether Pope Leo X was more deserving of praise or blame for his decision to join Charles V in turning against France, in order to drive the foreigners out of Italy. He came finally to the conclusion that the aim of this policy very much deserved to be admired and praised, but that it represented a *nobile e magnifico edifizio* built on insecure foundations. To temporize, remain in suspense, change one's friends frequently, wait for the favourable moment, and wherever possible achieve a gain in power without shedding blood—this was the role he believed was reserved for those Italian States that still remained free.

Ammirato also, who lived in Florence (1531–1601), made it plain in his *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* (1594) that the best advice he could give rulers was to be satisfied with their own frontiers. He issued a warning reminder that Venice had once almost lost her freedom, through having aroused a suspicion that she was striving for dominion over the whole of Italy. He also criticized the most recent example he had experienced of grasping power-policy—the Armada of Philip II. By embarking on this adventure, Spain had aroused political opposition in Germany, and during the course of it the Turkish danger had grown.

The thought of these political theorists was thus suffused by a fear of the great powers, and by a conservative spirit which renounced grandeur and was eagerly directed, rather, at more moderate aims and at maintaining the balance of power. The most conservative among them was Giovanni Botero (1540–1617), a pupil of the Jesuits and a priest. In his various positions, first as secretary of Cardinal Carlo Borromeo in Milan, afterwards in the service of the Duke of Savoy in Rome, then as tutor to Savoyard princes in Madrid, and finally during a period of scholarly leisure in Paris, he acquired a thorough knowledge of the political world of southern and western Europe. Through the medium of his widely-read works, and chiefly through his book *Della ragion di Stato* (1589), he founded a political school and his ideas

collected numerous followers.[1] For he completely satisfied the need that existed in the courts and with the rest of the public who were interested in politics, for a form of sustenance which was easily digested and tastefully served up. Compared with Machiavelli, his was a very average mind. Unlike the Florentine's, it did not have any of those sharp corners on which one could bruise oneself and come to harm. It appealed to the Catholic bigot courts of the Counter-Reformation as offering a mild antidote to the cynicism and anti-clericalism of Machiavelli; while, in using it, one did not need to renounce entirely the element of usefulness in the recipes of Machiavelli. The edifice of his thought resembles a very richly decorated Jesuit church, in a style evolved from the Renaissance; and the tone of his teaching is that of a preacher who mingles dignity with gentleness and severity. There was something for everyone in the sack of his wisdom and his political experience; and he was just as able to satisfy the friends of the Church and of Spanish world dominion, as the admirers of the republican independence of Venice. The expression *dolce armonia* (which came straight from contemporary art criticism) was used about him; and Catholic monarchs commended his book to their courtiers.[2]

Right at the very outset of his work, he undertook the task of rendering harmless the catchphrase (which on account of Machiavelli had become infamous) of *ragione di stato*, and giving it an innocuous meaning. *Ragione di stato*, according to his definition, is a knowledge of the means suitable for founding, maintaining and enlarging a State. But if one should ask, which is the greater achievement, to enlarge a State or to maintain it, then the answer can only be—the latter. For one makes gains by means of power, but it is through wisdom that one keeps what one has. The exercise of power is open to many, but of wisdom only to a few. And if one asks which realms are the most lasting, the large, the medium-sized or the small ones, then the answer must be: the medium-sized ones. For the smaller ones are too seriously threatened by the lust for power of the bigger ones, and the bigger ones are too exposed to the envy of their neighbours and to deterioration from within. 'Those realms, which have been raised up by frugality, have been cast down by opulence.' Sparta fell as soon as it extended its rule. But as an example of the greater durability of medium-sized States, he chiefly

[1] There are real catacombs here of forgotten literature by mediocrities. For this, cf. the extremely intelligent and scholarly, but somewhat capricious and long-winded books by Ferrari, *Histoire de la raison d'état*, 1860, and *Corso sugli scrittori politici italiani*, 1862 (he also deals with many unpublished works), and Cavalli, *La scienza politica in Italia* in *Memor. del R. Instituto Veneto*, 17 (1872). In general, cf. Gothein's presentation in *Staat und Gesellschaft der neueren Zeit* (Hinneberg, *Kultur der Gegenwart*) and ch. 5 of this book.

[2] Calderini, *Discorsi sopra la ragion di stato del Signor Botero, Proemio*, republished 1609.

extolled Venice. Unfortunately however the medium-sized States could not always remain satisfied; they strove after greatness, and then got into danger, as was shown by the earlier bid for expansion on the part of Venice. He gave a shrewd warning to the Spanish Empire not to injure the freedom of Venice: 'Do not break with powerful republics, save when the advantage to be gained is very great, and victory is certain; for in those countries the love of freedom is so passionate and so deeply rooted, that it is almost impossible to extirpate. The plans and undertakings of the rulers die with them; but the thoughts and deliberations of free cities are almost immortal.' But then, after borrowing this from Machiavelli,[1] he goes on to praise the House of Hapsburg, the greatness of whose princes he believed to be a recompense for their outstanding piety. Above all (he went on to advise), never break with the Church; it will always have the appearance of wickedness, and no purpose will be served by it. In their wars against the Popes, Milan, Florence, Naples and Venice have gained nothing, and they have had to sacrifice much.

The coinciding of the interests of the Church with the interests of realist policy (the entire Spanish system rested on this conjunction of interest) was therefore also a keystone of his theory of *ragione di stato*. Go along with the Church and all will be well with you, is the general sense of it.[2] He advised rulers, before any deliberation in the state council, to talk the matter over first with distinguished doctors of theology in a private council of conscience. Nevertheless he was experienced and worldly-wise enough to know that there was not always complete agreement between piety and worldly wisdom. However much softness and moderation he might use to tone down the character of true *raison d'état*, and however much he might try to adapt it to the needs of the Church and of morality, he still could not hide the truth from himself when he looked at things fairly and squarely. And the truth was that the crystal-hard core of all political action (just as Machiavelli had already taught) was the selfish interest of ruler or State. 'Take it for an undoubted fact', he wrote, 'that in the deliberations of princes it is personal interest that puts aside every other consideration. And for this reason one cannot put one's trust in friendship, family relationship, alliance, or any other kind of bond, unless it is firmly based on the self-interest of whoever one is dealing with.' In an appendix to his book he finally confessed without reservation that State interest and self-interest were in essence identical: 'In their friendships and enmities, princes are

[1] *Principe, ch. 5: Ma nelle repubbliche è maggior vita, maggior odio, più desiderio di vendetta; nè gli lascia nè puo lasciare riposare la memoria dell'antica libertà.*

[2] Concerning an unsuccessful attempt by Levi to reduce Botero's basic Catholic interest to mere expediency, cf. the striking remarks of Ghiron in the *Rivista stor. Ital.*, 1927, 350.

guided by what is advantageous to them. Just as there are foods which, though unpalatable by nature, are made palatable by the seasoning the cook gives them; so they are turned, by their nature or their emotions, to this side or that, according as self-interest directs their mind and emotions; because in the last resort *ragione di stato* is little else but *ragione d'interesse*.' [1]

More profound reflection would have caused him to doubt the harmony (about which he so unctuously sermonized) between State interest and religious duties, and would perhaps have embroiled him in all kinds of problems to do with a fundamental view of the universe—problems for which the intellectual atmosphere of his time was not yet ready. He avoided these (as practical statesmen in every period have always done), and contented himself with warning rulers not to set up any *raison d'état* which was contrary to divine law; for this would be like setting up one altar against the other. And right at the end of his book he swung round to a complete condemnation of the entire modern policy of self-interest. Today, he went on, no great joint undertakings can be carried out by rulers, because the gap between opposing interests is too wide. But at one time, during the heroic period of the Crusades, it was possible to act together, with no other interest at heart but the glory of God. The Greek Emperors thwarted the Crusaders. What was the result? The barbarians first drove us out of Asia, and then conquered the Greeks. *Ecco il frutta della moderna politica.* In a later work, he traced even the fall of France back to the same cause. When France became friendly with the Turks and the Huguenots, then belief was weakened, for 'if one derives all things from an unreasoning and bestial *ragion di stato*, then there is a general loosening of the bond of belief, which unites souls and nations'.[2]

Botero's theory could therefore serve as a good breviary for those father-confessors who dabbled in politics. They preached the subjection of one's own interest to the glory of God; they preached further (though this did not always ring true) that one's own interest was in harmony with the glory of God; and if it finally came to it, they would admit, half resigned, half complaining, that personal interest was stronger than any other vital forces. But these violations and contradictions were an exact reflection of the political practice of Counter-Reformation courts. In the years which followed, even one of the Popes, Urban VIII, offered a corrupting example by the way in which he put State interest before religious interest and obstructed the Catholic powers in their struggle against Gustavus Adolphus.

It was not merely the religious tradition, but also the tradition of humanism, that made it difficult for Botero to build up his theory purely

[1] *Aggiunte fatte alla sua ragion di stato*, Venice, 1606, p. 67 f.
[2] *Le relazioni universali* (1595), 2, 8; also *infra*.

empirically and with a consistent sense of reality. He went on borrowing the problems and methods of diplomacy to a great extent from the writers of antiquity, without stopping to ask himself whether they were still applicable to modern relationships.[1] Indeed, greater men than he, such as Machiavelli and Bodinus, did exactly the same. This conventional humanistic method was founded not only on the respect which one had for antiquity, but also on the long-established dogmatic approach to history—an approach which looked on the whole historical process (and on all the forms assumed, during its course, by life and by the State) as being essentially similar and therefore ever-recurring. So, when he wished to name the best and supreme source of political wisdom, Botero was able to point, not to individual experience (which was always too restricted), not even to the testimony of one's contemporaries, but to actual historical writings, 'for these embrace the whole life of the world'.

Thus he and his contemporaries looked on ancient and modern history as a single mass of examples, from which one could extract universally valid principles of statecraft, to be used in generalizing naïvely from very relative instances of experience. In the process, one could still find an intense interest in the individual differences obtaining within the actual world of the State, in which one lived. The authors of the Venetian Relations went to a great deal of trouble to provide their masters with reliable information on the subject; and Botero sought to satisfy the same need with a book on political science, which was planned on a large scale, and which he published in 1595 under the title *Le relazioni universali*.[2] In this book he proposed to deal with the causes of the greatness and the wealth of the more powerful rulers. But in fact he got stuck in the realm of pure statistics and chronology, and for the most part contented himself with factual statements concerning forms of government, finances, military affairs, and relations with neighbouring rulers. He did not rise to any more acute characterization of the various political systems and interests.

Even Boccalini, who was the most important of this whole group that was working on the theory of *ragione di stato*, was not yet doing this. But he towered above all the rest of the group, by virtue of the personal vitality which infused his political thought. The problems which occupied him, and the answers he gave to them, were not so very different from those of Botero and his companions. But while in their case the problems were watered down to an insipid conventionality, it was with him that the problems developed for the first time into a genuine

[1] Cf. especially Book 6 of the *Reason of State* concerning means of repelling foreign enemies.

[2] The unpublished part 5 of the work is included by Gioda in his biography of Botero (1895, 3 vols.).

and impassioned experience, and were thus enabled to present the full force of their historical content. In him the true spirit of the Renaissance and of Machiavelli lived again; but it was now advanced and altered into a baroque turbulence. First and foremost he influenced his contemporaries as a brilliant and mocking wit, a master of irony and satire, to whom nothing was sacred, and who was ready to expose humanity mercilessly. This already gave some indication of what could not be seen properly until his posthumous writings appeared long after his death and showed posterity what was the remoter background of his thought.

Trajano Boccalini (1556–1613) of Loreto [1] was educated for the law and interested in literature; he passed most of his life in Rome, where he enjoyed the favour of cardinals, and served in the Capitol as a judge in the tribunal of the State Governor, and as Governor in various parts of the Papal States.[2] In the process he came into conflict with the nobility of Benevent. In Rome he belonged to the anti-Spanish party; he took part, on behalf of Venice, in the great religious and political struggle which was waged by Pope Paul V against this city; he perhaps acted himself as an agent in the service of Venice, and he conducted a friendly correspondence with Paolo Sarpi, whom he found congenial, and who was the great champion of Venetian interests. Spain, scenting a dangerous enemy in this gifted and fearless man, once tried to win him over with the prospect of State office; he firmly refused. He was also suspected by the Inquisition in Rome, and since it finally became too hot for him there, he moved in 1612 to Venice. Once there, he now dared to publish the book which, out of all the works planned or begun by him previously in Rome, was the one that has made him best known—the *Ragguagli di Parnaso* (1612–13). This is a comic account by two centurions from the kingdom of Apollo on Parnassus, in which men and things of the past and present are discussed by the wise men of Parnassus and judged by Apollo. He gave a similar form to a smaller work of his, *Pietra del paragone politico*, which he only dared to circulate in manuscript, because it culminated in a bitterly angry denunciation of Spanish policy. He died on 26th November 1613; according to a report which it is impossible to prove with any certainty, it was by the hand of an assassin hired by Spain.[3] His *Pietra del paragone politico* then

[1] There are new monographs on him by Mestica (1878), Silingardi (1883, inaccessible to me), Beneducci (1896) and Galeotti in the *Arch. stor. ital.* N.S.I. Cf. also Belloni in the *Storia letteraria d'Italia*, vol. 7, and Stötzner in the *Archiv für Studium der neueren Sprachen*, vol. 103. The judgment on him by Toffanin, *Machiavelli e il Tacitismo*, pp. 192 ff., seems to me mistaken. There is a new edition of his *Ragguagli di Parnaso* in the *Scrittori d'Italia* (Bari, 1910–12, 2 vols.).

[2] Cf. *Bilancia politica*, 1, 66.

[3] The rumour that he was murdered with sandbags is contrary to the original report that he died after a fortnight's fever; but his son believed he had been poisoned. Galeotti, *loc. cit.*, pp. 123 and 127.

appeared in print in 1615; [1] his greatest work, the Commentary on Tacitus, did not appear until 1678, under the title *La bilancia politica.*[2]

On the basis of the impressions he received of his time, Boccalini formed for himself a quite staggering picture of State life in general. Even the Renaissance had already witnessed the most frightful demoralization of political life; but at the same time the men it had known had been full of strength, beauty and real ardour—that same ideal of *virtù*, which Machiavelli had proclaimed, and the glow of which had even shone here and there in the faces of the responsible rulers, statesmen and generals. But Boccalini felt himself to be in the middle of a century of the most profound wickedness; he could only derive a sorry comfort from the assertions of history that those same disgusting diseases, which he saw disfiguring his own *secolo*, had been prevalent at all times. The pictures he drew of public life in Rome and in the Papal States, which are scattered about in great numbers amongst the pages of his Commentary on Tacitus, are valuable as historical sources, since they are the testimony of an unprejudiced contemporary. They reveal a horribly depraved conduct of justice and administration, the complete defencelessness of the poor and innocent, secret murders in prison, the use of poison at the tables of the great,[3] and a whole atmosphere poisoned through and through with spying and informing, with smiling hypocrisy and mendacity. From the knowledge he had of the princely courts and the seats of government of Italy and Spain, he could think of nothing better than that his beloved Venice, with the strict discipline and the republican virtue (which he idealized excessively) of its nobility, should be an oasis in the desert of his fatherland.

But the full disparity between the Renaissance and the time of Boccalini is only revealed, if we compare together the practical attitudes which he and Machiavelli took up towards the wrongs of their time. Amid all the rottenness of the public spirit, which he saw around him,

[1] It is interesting that, as early as 1616, there appeared a German translation of the work by G. Amnicola (Chr. Besold?), dedicated to the States-General of the Netherlands. The foreword says: 'Because at this time the Spanish power is especially desirous of breaking through in Germany', this discourse, which reveals the Spanish character, has been translated. In 1617 there appeared a selection from the *Ragguagli*, translated into German. Cf. Stötzner, *loc. cit.*, p. 137.

[2] 3 vols.; vols. 1 and 2 edited by Lud. Dumay, vol. 3, by Gregorio Leti. Besides giving an extract from the *Ragguagli* and reproducing the *Pietra del paragone*, this contains a number of letters by Boccalini; but according to the assertion of Leti himself, not all of these are attributable to Boccalini, and they have also been considerably altered by the editor. Moreover the editing of the first two volumes is inadequate, and has been watered down from the Protestant point of view. I did not have access to the supposed earlier editions of 1667 and 1677. Regarding the MSS. that are still extant, cf. Galeotti, p. 131.

[3] Cf. also Settala, *Della ragion di stato*, p. 27: *Appresso de' principi nissun luogo, nissuna parentela, nissuna amicitia è sicura nel negocio de' veneni.*

Machiavelli never lost his reforming zeal. The idea of the regeneration of a fallen people was the fundamental thought that moved him; and to carry out this idea, he did not recoil even from the most frightful methods, which were put at his disposal by a demoralized age. On the one hand, he was in this respect entirely a product of his time, without any moral feeling in the choice of his methods; but on the other hand, as regards his final aims, he was a moralist in the highest sense of the word. As against this, Boccalini certainly showed an increased moral sensitivity in respect of the methods of statecraft, and this perhaps indicates a slight progress in the general attitude since the setting in of the Counter-Reformation. But he had lost too the vigorous radicalism of Machiavelli which, in spite of all the wickedness of his methods, had nevertheless concealed a strong power of belief. Boccalini threw up the game in hopeless despair, and criticized with biting scorn the ideas of the ordinary moralizers for improving the world. In his opinion it was no longer possible now to reform the nations by means of new laws. Things could only become better, if there was some reduction in the excesses of the courts and rulers, whose example was followed by society. 'When I observe the conduct of princes, I am filled with a fear that God's patience will be finally exhausted, and that a just punishment will come upon the world.' [1] One must, after all, leave the wicked world as it is, and set one's sails to the wind which is actually blowing. What object was there in rebelling against the misdeeds of rulers? He advised nations to endure their bad rulers with patience, for even a violent change of government would not improve their lot.

Beneath these moods of fatalistic resignation, we can catch a glimpse of other remarkable political and intellectual changes, which had taken place since the time of Machiavelli. Machiavelli had looked the great men of his time freely and boldly in the face; and, in spite of the respectful manner in which he might approach them personally, had yet felt himself to be on the same level with them—not only intellectually but, one could almost say, socially. The republican spirit was still alive in him, and did not yet feel itself completely squashed by the rise of monarchical powers in the world. Boccalini's mood was also free, bold and republican. But he felt that the republican asylum, which he eventually sought in Venice, was an asylum ringed round by the robber-dens of the princes; and he only dared to commit his most pungent thoughts to a manuscript destined for posterity, the Commentary on Tacitus. Even his republican sentiment was more acquired than native; it was more an expression of despair at conditions in the courts, and it was completely shot through with sentiments which had grown up in the atmosphere of the courts. He kept his gaze fixed on the courts, took

[1] *Bil. pol.*, 1, 121, 479. *Ragguagli*, 1, 284 (regarding the general reformation of the whole world).

a burning interest in following the activity and intrigues of rulers, ministers and courtiers, and offered scornful and satirical advice, which shows that he was closely bound up with this world and was never able to tear himself quite free from it. And for him the princes themselves stood like *homines sui generis* high above the rest of humanity, constituting the vital foci and powers of destiny who had to be reckoned with, even although they were, in respect of their fearful power and greatness, their motives and passions, quite incalculable. This had been the historical process in the Roman world, during the century that had passed since Machiavelli; the princely court had been inflated up to the heights like a protuberance, casting its shadow over the minds of all men. This process is not indicated nearly so clearly and strikingly in the devout court literature of men like Botero and Balzac, as it is by the fact that even so free and obstinate a man as Boccalini was still to a great extent under the spell of this spirit of the time. But the consequence now was that for him the vital impulses of the monarchical States of his time always appeared cloaked in the poisonous vapours of the courtly world within which the rulers acted. Even Machiavelli, when he studied the policy of monarchical States, concentrated more on the rulers personally responsible than on the States themselves; but their behaviour was still viewed by him to a great extent in the clear and sharp light of a brutal factuality.

Boccalini had a sense that the absolutist and courtly monarchy, which had developed in recent times, did, with its morally ruinous effects, represent something historically new. In one of his stories about Parnassus,[1] he makes an investigation take place on the subject of why sincerity has disappeared from the world. Even the rulers complain of the disloyalty of their vassals and subjects; but the subjects retort that it is not from disloyalty, but from despair, that they have turned away from the old sincerity, because the rulers have misused it, turning it into a mere compulsory duty and sentiment of subservience. They no longer wanted to be misused and degraded by the rulers, and they longed for a *governo libero*. This could only mean that he was directly accusing the absolutism of his time of having destroyed the old moral unity of the feudal past. It echoes the opinions expressed by Gentillet. The new relationship which had grown up since the Renaissance between rulers and nations seemed to him to be immoral, through and through.

Boccalini was never tired of crying out to the rulers: Banish from your hearts all personal passions, rule justly and mildly, take for your models the republics, which are not ruled in accordance with personal interests and ambitions, but by the lodestar of the common weal. But he himself lacked the belief that things could really improve. For was it possible to separate clearly the personal interests of the rulers and their

[1] *Ragguagli*, 1, 95.

immoral methods of administration from the public and universal interests of the States and nations? Certainly Boccalini was capable of saying in plain terms, 'It is self-interest that inspires the tongue of princes, not justice and not a love of the common weal.' [1] But to achieve a firm foundation for this moral attitude, he should by rights have made an attempt to establish a thorough and exact division, in individual instances, between self-interest and the common good, and to prove that such a separation was possible. This he did not and could not do. He had too definite a feeling that the detestable governmental methods of the rulers resulted, not only from a corrupt disposition, but also from an iron pressure of necessity, and that this was something indispensable to the life of States and nations. And so, immediately afterwards, he was also capable of admitting, 'It is self-interest that really tyrannizes over the souls of tyrants, *and even of those princes who are not tyrants*.' [2] Rulers have made use of the greatest artistry, he says elsewhere, to induce men to shed their blood for them. They sow hatred and dissension amongst men, to make sure of their allegiance. But (as Apollo says, in the arraignment of these machinations) unfortunately these are necessary evils, for it is only on the principle of *ben dividere* that princes could rule with security. If the peoples were left to themselves, then much more terrible cleavages than these would ensue. It is not the evil nature of the rulers that is to blame for it, but the mutinous unstable character of the peoples.[3]

And so it became his object, indeed his individual passion, to plumb the souls of the rulers to their very bottom, and reach down into those depths where what was infamous and bad was born of a union between the greed for power and the constraining force of things; and it was born moreover to live a life constrained by necessity and also immoral, born to achieve results and to decide the fate of nations. He speaks in one place of the *cupezza dell'animo*, of the dark depths of the soul, which constitute the greatest strength and virtue (both expressed by the untranslatable word *virtù*) of a ruler, and which are responsible for the glory of a Tiberius.[4] It is understandable that, in considering a phenomenon which is so terribly dualistic, the expressions he uses should also turn out to be dualistic and mutually contradictory. At one moment he sees only the blind satanic concupiscence, and the next moment he sees more the constraining force of things, explaining and rationalizing the eager desire. 'I must state frankly that, when ambition enters the soul of a prince, then he is no longer a protector of men, no longer a viceroy of God on earth; he changes into a dragon, a Lucifer. For if a private individual, however criminal he may be, cannot resist a feeling of horror

[1] *Bil. pol.*, 1, 85. [2] *Loc. cit.*, 1, 91.
[3] *Ragguagli*, 2, 211; cf. 2, 90 and 139 f., and *Bil. pol.*, 1, 137 and 2, 146.
[4] *Bil. pol.*, 2, 90.

when he is about to commit a murder, then what kind of a soul must a prince have, when he can enter so cheerfully on a thousand murders?' [1] And then again he says, 'It is impossible to bind a prince; just as impossible as for the cows to bind the cowherd, because there is no other means of binding him except by his own self-interest and profit.' [2] And he tried to exercise the utmost sympathy with the ruler's soul, and to grasp at the same time both the heights and the depths of its existence: 'Whoever is born to a moderate state of fortune, can endure hardship and poverty; but princes are obliged to drain the bitterest cup, and to experience the extremes of good and evil.' [3]

He could express even more forcefully the daemonic element that exists in the political behaviour, not only of a ruler, but also of a statesman in power—that element which is capable of swallowing up the agent himself: 'The interest of the State is exactly like a hound of Actaeon, it tears out the entrails of its own master. Hell has no terror which could frighten the heart that is filled with the passion for ruling. The man of politics gets firmly into his head the principle that everything else must give way before the absolute necessity of asserting and maintaining oneself in the State; he sets his foot on the neck of every other value in heaven and earth. The desire to govern is a daemon which even holy water will not drive out.' His words recall the restlessly turning and twisting figures of the Baroque artists, moved by lust and passion; whereas formerly in Machiavelli there were reflected the austere figures of Michelangelo, pregnant with action, yet calmly composed.

Before we proceed to the consequences of this theory, let us cast one more glance at Boccalini's own point of view, and at his own individual interest in the interest of the State. One has the feeling that it was the same with him as with Actaeon, and that he had to change himself into the deer that he wanted to bring down. It was with a quite sincere moral feeling that he dreaded the power of State interest; but he was in love with this very dread, and considered there was something great and exalting in the act of participating spiritually in this daemonic world. 'To penetrate into the actions of great princes is a praiseworthy form of curiosity, which signifies greatness of soul and beauty of spirit.' [4]

His whole interest in world history was concentrated on these *arcana imperii*. He said indeed, in a broad sense, that the writing of history had originated with men themselves. But there was only one method of writing history which he thought was really valuable; and this was the method first used by Tacitus, that 'prince of political historians', who had first invented the lens for looking into the secret life of rulers. There were curiosities enough in history to delight the ignoramus. Livy was the right man for those who took pleasure in battles, conquests and

[1] *Bil. Pol.*, 1, 281, 376 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1, 186.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1, 154.
[4] *Ibid.*, 1, 430.

triumphs. But whoever wanted to distil the essence of political theories from history ought to stick to Tacitus. He also despised the rhetorical type of history, full of fine writing. He praised Guicciardini who came near to Tacitus; but he also praised almost as highly the shapeless and clumsy sketches of the political men of business, because they really knew and understood something of the policy of their masters. In order to portray events, it was always a question of first showing the anatomy of rulers and nations.[1]

This programme was very important and productive for the future; and yet one ought not to identify it with the aims of the modern political method of writing history. For the modern method aims, not only at revealing the hidden origin of political decisions in the mind of the ruler, but also at unfolding the whole drama of the forces and consequences which these decisions unleash; it aims, in fact, at giving the entire picture of what political power signifies and is capable of achieving in the life of nations. But Boccalini spoke slightingly of the fact that Livy only presents the *forze* of politics, whereas Tacitus shows its *arte* and *sagacità*. And finally what greatness was there in all of Roman history, with its bloody robberies and devastation of the whole world? O, you Romans, so unjustly praised! God sent you the tyranny of Tiberius as a just punishment.

It is highly instructive to observe how, in this Italian of the Counter-Reformation, there could exist side by side both the moral loathing, which a man of culture feels for the workings of power, and also a passionate joy in the play of the intrigues, which power sets in motion. One has to learn to know this type of mentality, which embraces and carries on all the contradictions of the Renaissance, and by the light which it sheds, even Machiavelli's type of mentality becomes more intelligible. The relationship between intellectual culture and power was still entirely different from what it is in modern times, and the intellectual culture did not have the same aims as modern culture. Whilst one could feel disgust that 'power in itself was wicked', one yet discovered in it a certain element of culture (as the term was understood and valued at that time—namely, strength, skill and acuteness of the human mind); and it was considered a high cultural ideal, it was considered 'greatness of soul and beauty of spirit', to share in the experience of it by disclosing the 'interests of the rulers'.

It is a task for the strong spirits who find some intellectual comfort in it. The specific individualism of the Renaissance, which contented itself with the enjoyment of its own heightened personality, shows itself still. As we have seen, Boccalini had no thought of exploiting the political understanding he had achieved for his own practical and political aims;

[1] Principal instances: Introduction to the commentary on Tacitus' *Agricola*, together with the *Bil. pol.*, 1, 334, 347; *Ragguagli*, 2, 249.

he did not think, by exposing the villainies of the rulers, to set the whole world aflame with indignation and stir it up to revolt. He was not himself a revolutionary, though he could certainly produce a revolutionary result. He stood midway between the Renaissance—of which the political mood was still far from being revolutionary, and was at the most only (as in the case of Machiavelli) a mood of reform—and the beginnings of the revolutionary spirit in Europe, which in France and the Netherlands had arisen from the idea of popular representation, an idea fostered by Calvinism. Italy, in whose principalities the conception of popular representation was dead, offered no holding-ground for it. In Italy, in any case, there was only freedom of thought, not freedom of action. The influence of this milieu on the political resignation of Boccalini is made perfectly clear by a comment which he repeats on several occasions. Should the lens, which Tacitus invented, be equally accessible to all? Should the truth about rulers and courts be known to the whole nation? Boccalini did indeed remark scornfully, that in these days even the very porters in the market-place chattered about *ragione di stato*;[1] but this seemed to him more like a noble sport which was beginning to become common, and was still only laughable and not in the least dangerous. But it would be really dangerous for the rulers, if the lens of Tacitus did in fact become common property, for then the masses could become rebellious, whilst the rulers still desperately needed the masses to remain in ignorance, so that they could be ruled without trouble. Boccalini also recognized this clearly, and he laid it down as being in the general interest of the State, that the lens of Tacitus should only be given to the secretaries and counsellors of rulers, as it was also obvious that the rulers would have to suppress political writings which were harmful to them.[2] But he himself had a great desire to write works of this kind; and (having, as he did, an independent mind) he was in no mood to allow any restriction of his right to scrutinize minutely the political shortcomings. He despised and ridiculed the 'tinsel' which, in Botero's definition, had veiled the essential character of *ragione di stato*.[3]

In one of his comic scenes of Parnassus,[4] the Grand Duke of Moscow is taken to task, because his subjects live like cattle, without being able to read or write. To this the Grand Duke replies, 'Having seen that the liberal arts elsewhere have produced a terrible conflagration, I have decided that such a harmful weed will never be allowed to take root in

[1] *Ragguagli*, 1, 315; *Bil. pol.*, 3, 81. Zuccoli also, who wrote on *ragione di stato* in 1625, bears witness that at that time the barbers and workers in the alehouses discussed *ragione di stato*. *Diss. de ratione status* (Latin translation by J. Garmers, 1663, p. 2).

[2] Commentary to *Agricola*, p. 13, *Ragguagli*, 2, 249.

[3] *Ragguagli*, 2, 290.

[4] *Pietra del paragone* (in *Bil. pol.*, 3, 186).

my Grand Duchy. If the Dutch and the Zeelanders had remained in their old unity and ignorance, and their pure hearts had never been infected with the harmful pestilence of the Greek and Latin tongues and arts, then they would never have rooted out the old religion and deposed so many rulers, or established such marvellous republics, the like of which was never even imagined by Solon or Plato or Aristotle.' The assembly on Parnassus is indeed shocked by these opinions, but several of the greatest potentates agree with the Muscovite. But the Duke of Urbino declares that he would rather forsake his country than abandon the liberal arts. Where men are idiots, Boccalini remarks elsewhere, there one has kingdoms and monarchies; where sciences and great minds exist, there one has republics. For the sciences teach one to investigate what are the boundaries of the ruler's power; it is through the sciences that we find the means of tying their hands and driving them out of the State. One can see how greatly his attention was really engaged by the successful revolt of the Dutch Republics. We recall that republics seemed to him the States in which the common good was set above private interest, and in which the laws ruled with an absolutely complete authority. And at the same time he held that a republic was—not indeed entirely without exception, but at any rate as far as its natural character was concerned—the form of State which went in for self-sufficiency and a peaceful policy. Freedom and great power seemed to him irreconcilable. So it was in the republic that he saw fully realized his ideal of culture and the State. 'The true fatherland for men is the free city.' [1] But this was, at least for him personally, not a propagandist ideal, for the realization of which one would be prepared to live and die. He does indeed describe in a witty scene from Parnassus,[2] how the rulers of Europe attempt to form a league of monarchical interests against the contagious idea of freedom, which is spreading from the German and Dutch Republics, and how they are forced to admit to themselves that such an idea could only be crushed with the greatest difficulty, and even then it would be necessary to hire mercenary troops.[3] But even if there burned in his soul (just as there did once in Machiavelli's) the fierce desire that Italy too should eventually be free, for him these were nevertheless dreams of a far-distant future; for the present he had no hope. For him it was enough that, here and there amid the wicked world of the princes, there should still exist sanctuaries of the republican spirit. At the same time he took it to be self-evident that these asylums for cultivated minds of his stamp could only exercise their function and maintain the necessary peace and stability, provided they

[1] *Bil. pol.*, 1, 495; cf. also 1, 339, 342, 349, 402. [2] *Ragguagli*, 2, 17 ff.

[3] This anticipation of the 'Holy Alliance' of 1815 reaches the witty conclusion that the rulers enthusiastically engage to help each other against the republics, but in their heart of hearts they intend to behave according to their own interests.

were communities with a strictly aristocratic government. He shrank before pure democracy, before the rule of the uncultured and unbridled masses.[1]

This was the peculiar manner in which his interests and ideals were restricted. His passion for political judgment was devoted to a world which he detested, but which it filled him with the greatest enthusiasm to understand. The very things which repelled him morally, attracted him intellectually. Although he was really of an unpolitical disposition, he became an acute and profound political thinker. How peculiar and alien this intellectual attitude seems to modern eyes; it was perhaps only possible in the atmosphere of the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation. Boccalini himself felt that he was continually hovering between two worlds: the world of appearances, of *apparenze*, and the world of *essenza*. But he felt it, not as a problem, but as unalterable fact, about which one had to comment wittily, but which did not need to be the cause of any personal scruples. For this world of appearance was unalterable and could not be affected by the ideals which existed in the world of being. For was not this wicked world of appearance also the natural world? Was it not a law governing all living creatures, that the big fish should eat the little fish and the weak be ruled by the strong? [2] What was the use, then, of the idealistic doctrinairism of a Cato? You are singing to deaf ears (Boccalini makes someone say to him), and have achieved nothing, either for yourself or anyone else. Boccalini's *ceterum censeo* therefore was, and continued to be, that one should trim one's sails according to the wind—and yet at the same time he despised those who did so.

It was not solely out of philosophical resignation and a well-bred indulgence that he renounced the making of propaganda for his republican ideal; it was also due to a subtle historical and political sense. What was alive and active in Venice (he observed) could not be learnt from books or men; it has to be imbibed with one's mother's milk. The

[1] Principal passages on democracy and mass-rule: *Bil. pol.*, 1, 48, 186, 337 f., 340. Only the Germans, he concedes, '*così sottili e eccellenti institutori di republiche, come inventori e fabricatori di varii instromenti, hanno prima, e solo trà tutti gli huomini saputo trovare il temperamento mirabile di fare una democrazia quieta, che si governi con prudenza e con osservazion delle leggi*'. By German republics, he often also means the Dutch. One small joke of his about the Germans may be included here. The Germans refuse to accept a universal statute-book for the nations which prescribes sobriety. You other nations, they say, live under the domination of rulers; but we preserve our freedom because we drink. If we were always sober, we would be just as helpless as you, and ambitious men would not be able to conceal their wicked plans so well as with you. *Il soverchio vino bevuto hà virtù di fare i corpi diafani. Ragguagli*, 2, 123 ff.

[2] Beneducci, *Boccalini*, p. 102, points out this naturalistic similarity to Darwin and Spencer. He might also have recalled Spinoza, who used the same image (*Tractatus theologico-politicus*, ch. 16).

laws of Venice could not be transmitted; republics were like trees which grew slowly and did not bear fruit at once. Too precipitate a freedom led only too easily, as was shown in the case of Florence, to a new tyranny. In general it was not possible simply to transfer good laws to other countries, for they had to correspond to the spirit, to the *genio*, of those who would have to obey them.[1] Blundering legislation and the *fureur de gouverner* were repugnant to him. From his own practical experience as governor in the Papal States, there was plenty he could say about the stupidity and harmfulness of having an enormous number of conflicting decrees; and he had no liking for jurists and literati, who took part in the business of government. 'It is very foolish to say that philosophers ought to rule. The philosophers of a prince, his real *letterati*, are the practical men of the court, who are familiar with the interests, the dependencies, the military defences and the financial resources, of their own and other princes.' In the last resort he believed that the true and supreme art of government could not be learnt, either by theory or practice; it was born in you, as a gift of God.[2]

All these considerations show once again that Boccalini was no mere dry tome, but a complete and vigorous personality of the highest intellectual culture, who had at the same time a very vital sense of reality. As a man he was 'a living book' (to use one of his own favourite phrases). He despised the use of philosophy in the business of politics, while at the same time he was conscious of the politically revolutionary effect which could be achieved by science. He respected aristocracy, and yet (like his friend Paolo Sarpi) he prided himself on the fact that true nobility lay, not in the blood, but in the mind. Everything seems to be living and struggling in him at the same time in a vital and original way. In spite of all his scepticism and of the irony, which he used in so masterly a manner, he never sank into an ironic view of the world; true to the spirit of the Renaissance, he always remained a naïve character, who trustingly followed his instinct. All his insights arose intuitively; they were indeed fertilized by his humanist education, but never slavishly accepted from it. If his had been a systematic mind, he would have become the founder of an all-embracing theory about the interests of rulers and States. For everything in him does really point in this direction; and (as we have seen) the sight of the daemon of State interest never left him any peace. Let us now take up again the thread which we dropped so that we could first get to know his intellectual character as a whole.

We have seen that, when passing judgment on a policy of self-interest on the part of the ruler, Boccalini hovered between a purely moralizing verdict, and the admission that such a policy was subject to

[1] *Ragguagli*, 1, 143 ff.; *Bil. pol.*, 1, 182 f.
[2] *Bil. pol.*, 1, 390; 2, 211; *Ragguagli*, 150, 246.

the inescapable pressure of State security and self-maintenance. 'The prince, who rules according to necessity and not as his spirit wills, is obliged to do things which he hates and abominates.' And this conception was the dominating product of his thought, the end towards which he had to struggle over and over again. I have come to the conclusion (he went on [1]), that Philip II did not cause Don Carlos to be killed [2] as a punishment for his evil disposition, but in order to prevent England, France, Italy, and other enemies of Spain from making use of Don Carlos against him; he did it for the sake of his State and his own life. It may indeed be a barbaric inhumanity (he remarked elsewhere [3]) that princes should secure their rule by killing off their relatives, but one could do no more than bemoan the necessity for it; for it was not a good thing to have too many striplings of the royal blood, and to prune off a few superfluous branches was not such a great token of godlessness as it seemed, but on the contrary it sometimes signified the love (*carità*) of the rulers for their peoples. This dreadful remark is partly accounted for by the crudity of the period, which even the century that had passed since the time of Machiavelli had not been able to overcome. It followed also from the staggering observation (recorded by him, however, with perfect calm) that the worlds of good and evil actions and consequences are not to be distinguished from one another unequivocally. (This observation is already reminiscent of the modern relativism.) Just as it is rare to find a medicine [4] which, in removing harmful juices from the body, does not also remove juices which are good and necessary for life; so it is equally rare to find good arrangements in the government of a State, which do not at the same time bring some harm in their train. And, *vice versa*, it often happens that rulers derive great advantage from disorders in the State. Rome suffered more harm from its able and energetic citizens, than it did from its most malicious foes. The beneficial sciences and the discovery of printing were both at the same time harmful and useful. Amongst the writings which appeared in Germany against the true religion, there were also some of an extremely revolutionary nature against the rulers—'Trumpets and drums, which called the nations to open rebellion.'

The 'true religion'! Boccalini regretted that Charles V had contented himself with having Luther's works burnt, instead of putting the man himself, the plague-spot, out of harm's way. He did not in the least share the sympathy of his friend Paolo Sarpi for Protestant doctrines,

[1] *Bil. pol.*, 1, 202.

[2] This was the universal (in this instance, unfounded) assumption of contemporaries; cf. Platzhoff, *Theorie von der Mordbefugnis der Obrigkeit im 16. Jahrhundert*, p. 76.

[3] *Bil. pol.*, 1, 472.

[4] *Ibid.*, 2, 468; also the commentary on *Agricola*, pp. 5 and 12.

although he did support the latter's struggle against the political encroachments of the Curia, and he ruthlessly chastised the underhand intrigues of many Popes. He noted with satisfaction that, on the whole, religion in Italy was now better off than before, but it would be wrong to suppose that he had any specifically religious disposition. He satirized the misuse of religion for political purposes, but his own all-round estimation of religion is itself steeped in political purpose. He considered that religion was to the nations what the bridle is to the horse; without obedience to divine laws, there could be no obedience to human laws. Religion was therefore a tool of government used to control herds of many millions; it was a State interest. And for this reason he also considered that unity of religion within the State was a State interest. In his opinion nations could not really love a ruler whose religion was different from theirs; on the contrary, they would be bound to hate him. Wherever there were two religions, that would also mean there would be two principal authorities in the State. In one of his scenes on Parnassus, he has Bodinus condemned to be burnt at the stake, on account of his doctrine of tolerance which was so harmful to the State.[1]

This was the *communis opinio* of his time which he was repeating here; only it should be noted in this connection that he speaks with the voice of stern *ratio status*, and not that of religious fanaticism. But even in this he was only reproducing what was the case in real life. For in actual fact no State could dare to be tolerant, until it had first become strong enough to be able to sustain the presence within itself of religious dissent without endangering the obedience of its subjects; the formation of standing armies therefore exerted the most important influence in favour of toleration. But Boccalini did considerable violence to history, in forcing the whole contemporary problem of creeds into the categories of his theory of self-interest. He was rash enough to assert that 'It was fear of the monstrous power of Charles V, which was the true cause of the present heresies'; [2] it was out of State interest that evilly-disposed rulers had given their support to the heresies of Luther and Calvin. The impious modern politicians had applied the method of *divide et impera* to religion, in order to divide the people still further; whereas the old politicians had not yet had sufficient impiety to blend the interest of God with that of the State. It would be superfluous to separate out the exaggeration from the truth in these statements. Yet his insight into the way in which the struggle for power against Charles V was connected with the fate of Protestantism, does nevertheless strike one as a lightning perception. And the whole terrible mood and tension which preceded the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, does come alive in his remark, 'But since the modern heresies have now become a matter

[1] *Ragguagli*, 1, 225 ff. [2] *Bil. pol.*, 1, 475, cf. 434 f.; 2, 225; 3, 148.

of State interest, henceforth they will no longer be solved by councils with disputations and decrees; they will be decided by armies in battle.'

Fundamentally he felt far less strongly about heresy than (as a passionate Italian and a true descendant of Machiavelli) he did about the Spanish rule. He felt a burning hatred for it; and perhaps it was this feeling alone which hindered him from subjecting the widely-ramified system of Spanish interests to a really cool and subtle analysis—such as would have been well within the powers of his political genius, and would have been welcomed from him by the modern historian. In substance then, it is only in somewhat crude colours that he portrays the brutal governmental methods which the Spaniards used within the countries conquered by them. They understood better than the French (he thought) how to hold conquered States, because they possessed the inhumanity which was of such cardinal importance for maintaining new States. 'To harry ruthlessly the principal barons of a new State, to exterminate there entirely the royal blood, to oppress the people to such an extent that they will have neither the strength nor the spirit to reconquer their freedom—that is the special branch of knowledge in which the Spaniard excels.' [1] French rule is like a violent fever of short duration, Spanish rule is like consumption. The Spaniards also vary their methods of government. They are arrogant in Sicily, not quite so arrogant in Naples, still less in Milan, while in Flanders they have really become quite amiable; but this is the result of the greater or lesser degree of cowardice (*viltà*) which is shown by those who obey them. There was a real outcry when he then went on to say that in the Netherlands the Spaniards had been brought to realize that 'The world wants to live, and does not want to live in the Spanish way'. Nevertheless he found a subtle political comfort in comparing the governmental methods of Spain with those of Ancient Rome; fortunately Spain had not imitated the Romans, who knew how to habituate the nations they conquered to the civic rights of Rome. But his sound judgment told him that even this brutal system of government was not held together merely by the interests of one ruler, but by the interests of an entire ruling nation. 'I remember', he recounts on one occasion, 'the conversations in Rome at the time of the death of Philip II. Some people were expecting that upheavals would ensue during the minority of his successor and because of the discontent among the grandees who had been badly treated by Philip II. But others said (and they were proved right), "No, the interest which the Spaniards have in good posts in the countries they rule, is so closely bound up with the greatness of their country, that they will take good care themselves not to open the door to misfortune by starting a Civil War." '

It is well known that, during the course of the great struggle for power

[1] *Bil. Pol.*, 1, 28; cf. 117, 134, 142, 356, 407; II, 73; *Ragguagli*, 2, 187.

between Spain and France to decide the fate of Italy, a greater insight was gained into the mechanism of the European balance of power, that is to say, into the automatic play of the communal interests of all States threatened by an overwhelming concentration of power in one single country. It is obvious that, since the Venetians had this insight, Boccalini had it too. The theory of the European balance of power is indeed nothing else but an aspect of the theory of *raison d'état* and of State interests, and it is really only possible to treat it in connection with these. In this respect Boccalini yielded to a tendency, which was to prove victorious in the later rationalistic treatment of history, but which also had its roots nevertheless in the spirit of the Renaissance, and especially in the theory of interest that it produced. He assumed here a conscious purposive course of action, when it was in fact only the force of circumstances that produced consequences which corresponded to those purposes. The illusion that there was some directing mind at work here, led straight on to it being taken for granted that a directing mind *was* at work. Thus Boccalini proceeded to attribute the Revolt of the Netherlands (which had given all the enemies of Spain a breathing-space) to a conscious act in favour of the balance of power—to an intrigue on the part of all those rulers who did not wish the whole of Italy to become the prey of Spain.[1] In his opinion, it was these rulers who had aroused the rebellion in the Netherlands, which had now become 'the sole salvation of Italy'. Boccalini could also do nothing else but gaze with sympathy and hope towards France and Henry IV, although he knew very well that not even the interests of France were directed purely and consistently towards the balance of power. He considered indeed that, for the freedom of Italy as a whole, it would be more dangerous to have Milan in French hands than in Spanish; for, owing to the fact that its territory bordered on France, it might arouse a desire in the French to get possession of the entire half of the peninsula.

Judging from the fate which Italy had to bear and from the historical environment of Boccalini, it is abundantly clear that his attention was concentrated more on the play of interest within the State than outside it. The relation between rulers and ruled, between power and freedom within the State, the contrast between courtly principality and aristocratic republic and the *arcana imperii* of one and the other—those were the questions which stirred to the depths of his soul the thinker who was pining for freedom and could scarcely breathe. Only in the case of one State was he able to draw up a general picture of its *raison d'état*, and make at least a sketch of its inward and outward interests: this was in the case of Turkey. Here, quite aloof from Christian national life, was a State which was arranged entirely differently. It claimed the attention of political minds, not only because it stood on the edge of the European

[1] *Bil. pol.*, 1, 474.

horizon like a thundercloud of power politics, but even more so on account of its wonderful inner structure. Even Luther had spoken with appreciation of the subtle worldly rule of the Turks.[1] Turkey brought to life and exemplified what the political thought of the Renaissance had always been striving after: an artificial construction which had been consciously and purposively built up, a State mechanism which was arranged like a cloak, and which made use of the various species and strengths and qualities of men as its springs and wheels. The Turk (says Boccalini, in astonishment),[2] who has never read the impieties of Bodinus or listened to the criminal advice of Machiavelli, is nevertheless a perfect politician. These completely barbaric rulers and avowed arch-enemies of the beneficial sciences still have the finest understanding of how the world may be governed, and know how to manipulate the supreme *ragion di stato*. He could easily illustrate this with the famous example of the Janissaries, who were recruited from conscript Christian children to form the shock troops of victorious Islam. Moreover, the efficient ones amongst them were not allowed to reach positions of authority, because they would possess too great a following in the main bulk of the Janissaries. Whereas the smaller number of Christian children, who were selected to form a seminary and educated for the higher official positions in the State, did not have such a following; and the rivalry which persisted among themselves rendered them harmless to the supreme ruler. The whole system of Islam seemed to him both wicked, and at the same time elaborated with a high degree of political refinement: the prohibition of wine made for efficient soldiers, polygamy always tended (on account of the rapid increase in the new generation) to bring influential families down again to a low level, the diabolical theory of Kismet was responsible for a wild courage. The rule never to surrender any land in which a mosque had been built led to newly-conquered countries being ferociously defended. The fact that sultans were forbidden to build new mosques, unless they had first conquered a new piece of land, incited them on to war. The doctrine that the souls of those who died when out of favour with their ruler were lost, tended to breed the greatest deference. The religious neglect of women showed that the founder of Islam was only concerned with the service of men.

And now for the equally acutely planned methods of foreign policy and the conduct of wars. The Turk would carry on a decisive and completely destructive war only against those large (but really disunited) kingdoms which could be completely overthrown and conquered; he waged short wars against those which, either on account of their own strength or because of their alliances, could not be overthrown so easily. In these cases he would be satisfied if a small piece of land was ceded.

[1] In the *Christl. Adel, Weimarer Ausg.*, 6, 459.

[2] *Ragguagli*, 1, 107; also 2, 237, 271, and *Bil. pol.*, 1, 377.

The Turks also knew that it is possible to strengthen one's opponent militarily, if one wages long wars. In his wars against the Emperor, it was his practice only to despoil him lightly at any one time, for fear of making the German and Hungarian nation too bellicose; and then (because this is the best method for a conqueror), instead of conquering a lot all at once, to tend rather to conquer a little with absolute certainty. Anyone who wants to become fat should not just eat a lot all at once; he should eat a little every now and again, and digest it properly. For it is a troublesome business to hold on to countries that have been newly conquered—especially when they are inhabited by a population which is warlike and of a different faith, and even more so if there still remains a powerful ruler, who can once more recover what has been lost. In addition, the Turk makes a practice of waging short wars against those rulers, whose overthrow could arouse the jealousy of other great potentates. In the Cypriot War, where, at Lepanto, command of the sea was lost, the Turk had experienced the harm arising from the danger of Christian leagues. Barren lands, like Poland and Moscow, were left alone; but the Turk strove for Friuli, in order to win the road to Italy.

This probably gives one the quintessence of the countless political conversations which went on at that time in Rome, Venice and Florence between men of business, of religion and of letters who were experienced in the ways of the world. The news from the East, which passed from mouth to mouth, could be very ingeniously interpreted then in conversation, and afterwards with some further pondering could be put into the sort of arrangement which Boccalini gives it here.[1] There can be no question of it having value as a source, such as the Venetian Relations about Turkey lay claim to. It is a series of reflections intelligently put together, which clearly manifest the tendency previously described of taking for granted as much purposively rational action as possible in the happenings of history. For our purpose, however, this rationalization is thoroughly instructive. For here Boccalini, with a mixture of irony, astonishment and disgust, deduces the final and most extreme consequences of his theory of *raison d'état*, and holds a mirror up to the rulers of his time. Look, he more or less says to them, there you behold your masters; they outstrip you all in the arts of hellish pharmacy. And this horrible State mechanism, which offends against the deity and degrades human nature, has been built up by barbarians and owes nothing at all to culture. The *ragione di stato*, therefore, the princely State of the Renaissance, had no need whatsoever of culture, in order to attain its full development. It is—and this is a consequence, which Boccalini himself may not have deduced consciously, but it is inherent in him and springs to one's attention immediately from his

[1] A few similar remarks are to be found in Campanella's Discourse on the Spanish Monarchy, ch. 23.

whole world of thought—it is not only without culture but even inimical to culture. We have already seen how after this (in the true Renaissance manner) he again feels himself magically attracted by this Gorgon's Head, and is once more able to feel the strength, the grandeur and the fatedness of the princely State.

No other thinker of this century has had such a profound and painful realization of the real impiety and immorality inherent in the incipient modern State, or of its completely dualistic attitude towards the cultural ideals of the age; that is to say, a realization of what was unsatisfying and injurious in it, but also of what was imperative and invincible in its vital impulses. In short, no other thinker envisaged so clearly the entire tissue of human passion, human reason and superhuman fate, which made up the State, at the same time both rational and irrational. This, above all, is the historical importance of Boccalini, that he makes really intelligible to us for the first time, through the live sensibility of a contemporary, the dark side of historical development. It is permissible to say this in spite of the deduction which has to be made, to allow for the angry and bitter exaggeration of his satire. He was never made to be a reformer or a revolutionary; he could never have discovered a real synthesis of power, freedom and culture, which could have led on to something more. Not only were the potentialities of the period unripe, but his own personal scepticism was of no use to that end. Since he believed that power and freedom were irreconcilable, he, with his passion for freedom, fled to the calm atmosphere of an aristocratic city-state, which had indeed no historical future and was just as intent as the princely State on a mechanical and unscrupulous [1] policy of self-interest and the balance of power, though it did still possess at that time a certain organic vitality and stability. He only had the very faintest presentiment that the nations would not always have to endure the yoke of the rulers—and he had no idea at all that at some future time the rulerless nations would be capable of continuing the same sins of the princely *ragione di stato*.

But the lasting historical importance of Boccalini for our problem lies in the fact that it was he who saw the problem for the first time in all its frightful duality. It was only because he was an Italian and an intellectual descendant of Machiavelli that he was able to grasp it empirically with absolute clarity, and recognize the natural necessity and inevitability of acting in accordance with *raison d'état*. It was only because he was a child of the Counter-Reformation that he was at the same time also directly conscious of the sinfulness that it involved. Machiavelli never felt this sinfulness, whereas his opponents as a rule never understood the natural necessity of *raison d'état*. What makes

[1] For example, on the subject of assassination in Venice, cf. Platzhoff, *Die Theorie von der Mordbefugnis der Obrigkeit im 16. Jahrhundert*, pp. 13 ff. and 32 ff.

Boccalini so interesting for modern historical research is precisely the fact, that he was able to unite moral judgment with realistic understanding. For modern historicism, too, would like always to embrace at the same time the world of moral values and the world of reality; it wants to moralize on the one hand, and study nature on the other. It is now seeking—and we shall later have to trace this process, in connection with Hegel—some connecting link which will bridge the duality, something or other which will really resolve the opposition. The solution which Boccalini found to meet his own personal requirements belonged too much to the Renaissance and had in it too much of what was instinctive and individual, to have any lasting significance—for he comforted himself with the spiritual pleasure he got from looking into the abyss. But this is something which all the greatest problems of historical life have in common: they are themselves timeless, though the attempts to solve them perish with the passing of time and remain relative. They compensate for this with the individual breath of warm life which emanates from each of them.

CHAPTER FOUR

CAMPANELLA

IN Boccalini's thought one sees reflected the awkward situation in which the man of intellect found himself, particularly in Italy, during the period of the Counter-Reformation. To what phenomena of the historical world surrounding him should he offer his allegiance? Certainly the Church, given new life by the Council of Trent, seemed at the moment to many to possess a sacrosanct value, now that the semi-Protestant and libertine tendencies had been ruthlessly suppressed. But in a man like Boccalini there was no trace of inner religious warmth. And anyone who, out of his own passionately vital feeling and thirst for knowledge, attempted to create for himself a meaningful divinely-enriched view of the world or tried to investigate freely the laws of the universe, was bound to run the danger, either of being burnt at the stake like Giordano Bruno, or of finding himself in prison like Galileo and Campanella. But we have already seen from the example of Boccalini how worrying were the problems of contemporary State life, and how inadequate was the situation of any thinker striving after political ideals. A century earlier, and again a century later, the situation was more favourable. Even during a period of his nation's misfortune, Machiavelli could still work for its political regeneration. A century later, the consolidated absolutist State was already feeling the first effects of the Enlightenment, and one could think out new aims for it. But in between the Renaissance and the climax of absolutism lay confused and troubled periods of transition, in which the monarchical States of the Continent presented an altogether unpleasing, and in many ways repulsive, appearance; they were incomplete both in respect of their structure and of their frontiers, which they painfully contested, with the inadequate means of power at their disposal, against enemies without and within. Their guiding principle was *ragione di stato*—a continual struggle, completely unhindered and yet at the same time skilfully conducted, to attain power by any means, great or small, pure or impure. But the consequences of this striving were still so limited and questionable that they did not succeed in concealing the

impure and petty means which the rulers, in their powerlessness, were forced to clutch at. The State still had no real nobility; and the *ragione di stato* (which still fell far short of being able to justify the striving for power from an idealistic point of view) was considered to be an unavoidable *partie honteuse*—shown up satirically by those who were entirely honourable, like Boccalini, and unctuously concealed by those who were less honourable, like Botero.

No, what these Italians were faced with in the courts of their own princes and in the monarchy of Philip II which ruled and oppressed them, and all that they heard about the monarchies of the *Oltramontani*, was by no means calculated to inspire or inflame a political idealism. At the most it was likely, as we have seen in the case of the whole school of *ragione di stato* and shall see again, to sharpen the intellect for a most acute and penetrating analysis of the mysteries of statecraft.

Amid these preoccupations Boccalini uttered a cry for a general reformation of the whole hateful world in which he lived, and this cry was heard then even in Germany.[1] But how was there ever to be any basic and thorough reform of State life, when he himself stated it to be a fact that the selfish and immoral *ragione di stato* ruled like an inexorable law of nature over the conduct of the great men and their servants? For if anyone had once become aware of these sinister depths contained in *ragione di stato*, without (like Boccalini) being able to content himself with the mere contemplation, so convulsing and yet at the same time so alluring, of these depths—if anyone really strove actively to emerge from despair into a better condition for society—then there was only one escape from despair open to him; namely a *salto mortale*, either in one direction or another. This was the case with the great Thomas Campanella, the Dominican monk from Calabria, the philosopher-poet and world reformer. His whole political and social activity was a continually sustained struggle against *ragione di stato*; it was (to express it quite tersely) a series of death-leaps, to try and elude it, overcome it with its own methods, and thus free humanity from it. This impressive drama perhaps teaches one more about the real essence of this epoch, than would a precise statement of the objective political events. For it lets one see quite clearly the limits set to this age by its destiny.

A brief glance at the chief facts of his life will suffice to give a preliminary idea of these problems.

[1] His satire on the general reformation of the whole world (*Ragguagli di Parnaso*, 1, 258 ff., 1. *Centurie*, n. 77) plays a role in the history of Rosicrucianism. Joh. Val. Andreä used Besold's translation of Boccalini's General Reformation as an introduction to his book (which was half-serious and half-joking), *Fama fraternitatis* of the praiseworthy Order of Rosicrucians, which, by his mystical account of the supposed existence of such an order, attempted to found one. Cf. Guhrauer, *Joachim Jungius*, p. 60; Begemann, *J.V. Andreae und die Rosenkreuzer*, *Monatshefte der Comeniusgesellschaft*, 18.

Campanella was born in Stilo in 1568, and entered the Dominican order as a young man. He first distinguished himself in bold philosophical thought and discovery, shattering the authority of the Scholastics and of Aristotle, and demanding that the essence of things should no longer be investigated by means of the sophistical deductions of individual reason, but rather by the faithful observation of nature. He did not indeed execute this consistently, because there were in his own mind too many passions, impulses and remnants of the old way of thought, all jumbled together. But in his purest moments, and most of all as a poet, he rose to a sublime consciousness of the one-ness of Nature, and of the divinity which flowed down from above to penetrate it. He had a passionate desire, impelled by a strong sensuousness, to see realized also in human life that harmony of the world as a whole, which he had already grasped in contemplation; it was a desire which was sorely galled by the evils of this world. As a proud and fiery South Italian, who saw his homeland as the seat of the greatest intellectual power in Europe, he hated the Spanish rule as a regime of brutal authority, and of the worst kinds of economic and social oppression and exploitation. In the social life however, which surrounded him, he felt with quite original intensity the real incoherency of the parts, the lack of guiding reason, and the boundless sway of self-seeking. It is not often that one sees such a violent clash between a burning zeal for the sublime, and the obstacles of this world. 'With hampered flight I strive toward the stars.' But even in himself there remained obstacles that were never entirely overcome. The darkest and most retrograde forces of his time—superstition, astrology, pendantry and fanaticism, and even a boastful megalomania—governed one part of his being; and his Southern sensuality also contributed to the utopian ideas of his reforms for society and the State, which he must have formed during the last years of the sixteenth century. It is impossible to determine with any certainty how far he had really succeeded at that time in freeing himself also from the Church and from its dogmas and canons, and whether he actually (as some witnesses have stated) equated God completely with Nature and looked on Christianity as a purely human production.[1] But he was certainly a revolutionary; and, stimulated by astrological calculations which foretold great world upheavals with himself in the role of prophet, he raised the standard of rebellion in

[1] Cf. the two great works of Amabile, *Fra Tommaso Campanella: La sua congiura, i suoi processi e la sua pazzia*, 3 vols., 1880–2, and *Fra Tommaso Campanella ne' castelli di Napoli, in Roma ed in Parigi*, 2 vols., 1887, which contain the documentary material. Also the works of Kvačala, *Th. Campanella und Ferdinand II, Sitzungsberichte der phil.-hist. Klasse der Wiener Akademie* 1908, vol. 159; *Th. Campanella, ein Reformer der ausgehenden Renaissance*, 1909; *Protestant. gelehrte Polemik gegen Campanella*, Jurjew, 1909; *Über die Genese der Schriften Campanellas*, Jurjew, 1911. Hlso Blanchet's impressive work on Campanella, 1920. Among the evidence of

Calabria in September 1599, and did not even disdain the help of the Turks in this venture. The rebellion was nipped in the bud, and Campanella had to pay for it by suffering Spanish imprisonment and the rack.

During the interrogation one of Campanella's friends gave evidence that he had wanted to found a State in which men could live 'in community', and that he had thought of organizing the production of human beings in such a way that only good men would be created.[1] These are two fundamental ideas of his famous utopia of the 'Sun State', which he wrote in 1602 in the prison at Naples. He himself looked on it, not at all as a utopia, but as an image of the future, which was both possible and worth striving for; because even to the end of his life he still clung to this hope. The Sun State was to be a communistic commonwealth, which would render egoism impossible in principle, and would institute a general obligation to work, together with a rational division of labour in accordance with the talents and abilities of individuals. Besides this however it was to carry through a planned system of eugenics by abolishing private marriage and regulating sexual intercourse by selecting individuals who were physically suited to one another—and all this to be done from above by an all-controlling theocracy of the wisest and most cultured, culminating in one supreme priestly ruler.

But even before the time when he—as a prisoner of Spain and one accused of heresy—had written the book about the Sun State, indeed even before his rebellion, he had written books which sang the praises of the very rulers against whom he was struggling, and had given them well-thought-out pieces of advice as to how they could extend their power. These books were the *Discorsi politici ai principi d'Italia* and the *Monarchia hispanica*.[2] There is one basic idea common to both of them: namely that it is the will of God that the world-dominion of Spain, exercised in part directly, and in part indirectly by means of semi-autonomous States, but moderated and elevated by a spiritual (and also

witnesses contained in the *Sommario del processo*, etc., in Amabile, *Camp., la sua congiura*, 3, 421 ff., the only ideas which I consider absolutely reliable are the ones which are confirmed in some way by Campanella in his writings. But it is quite possible that Campanella expressed himself in the heathen and naturalistic manner reported by witnesses.

[1] Amabile, *Th. Camp., La sua congiura*, etc., 3, 439.

[2] We are following the edition of the *Discorsi* by Garzilli, 1848. The edition in the *Opere di T. C. scelte* by d'Ancona in 1854 gives an abridged version. Through the agency of Campanella's German friends, the *Monarchia hispanica* appeared first in 1620 and 1623 in a German translation by the Tübingen Professor Besold (the same one who also made Boccalini known in Germany); the Latin text (perhaps translated from the German?) appeared in 1640, and the Italian in Ancona's edition of C's. *Opere scelte* Both works are known only in the form which Campanella gave them during his first years of imprisonment.

politically powerful) world-rule of the Papacy, should bring salvation to the nations and usher in the Golden Age. In one sense he wrote these books from a motive of cunning calculation, in order to be able to appeal to them if his undertaking should miscarry—and he did in fact always use them energetically in this way against his accusers. But this was not his only motive for writing them. There are ideas in these books which fit in exactly with his Sun State. And he carried still further this duality and connection between his own inner world and the external world around him which threw him into bondage. For twenty-seven years he languished in Spanish prisons. It is a monstrous picture, to think of this wildly gifted and physically strong man sitting with burning eyes in the frightful dungeon, where the Spaniards kept him for a time, writing his books and groaning that he was like Prometheus chained to the Caucasus.[1] He did not write only philosophical works, but also books for the honour and benefit of the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith. Nor did the Catholic world wish to destroy entirely such a valuable defensive weapon. In 1626 the Spaniards handed him over to Rome, where he then lived (to begin with, under a light form of detention); though worn down physically, he was still unbroken in spirit, and he went on writing. When he became once more suspect to the Spaniards and they began to persecute him, he was advised in 1634 by Pope Urban VIII to take refuge in flight. He eventually found asylum in France, which sheltered him until his death in 1639. He lived in the Jacobin Monastery which was to become world-famous during the French Revolution. In his last years in Rome and during his stay in France, he produced a whole series of books which provided a recantation of his *Monarchia hispanica*, and paid homage to the rising constellation of Richelieu and France. He concluded with an eclogue on the birth of the Dauphin, later to become Louis XIV—the 'wonder child' who would fulfil all the hopes of Christendom, and would eventually establish in the midst of the Christian world the Sun State itself, the *Urbs Heliaca*.[2]

This is a remarkable and puzzling life. Campanella taught that the world had two centres: one in the sun, of warmth and love, and one in the earth, of cold and hatred. His own life turned into a battlefield for these two worlds. During the years of his agonizing imprisonment he had to struggle within himself against all the foul fiends of existence—despair of God, and thoughts of madness and suicide. And at the same time, while in prison just as much as while at liberty, he was struggling against earthly powers in order to achieve his ideal of the Sun. But

[1] *Ego tanquam Prometheus in Caucaso detineor.* To Scioppius, 1st June 1607, in Amabile, *Camp. ne'castelli di Napoli*, 2, 57.

[2] Appeared in print in 1639; reprinted in Amabile's *Th. Camp. ne'castelli di Napoli*, etc., 2, 347 ff.

against the latter he was not waging any honourable open warfare; on the contrary, he tried spasmodically and repeatedly to make them subservient to his own purposes, by rendering services to them. So it came about that he was capable of making recommendations one day to this political power, and the next day to another; while he never, at any one moment, pronounced his final opinion or betrayed his real aim. All the political possibilities which he thought up and recommended were for him means to an end, and were adjusted to suit the earthly powers which he accepted as given; they were so many veils which disguised his real driving impulse. But at the same time they were also something more than mere veils and masks, for they contained definite ideas for a better political arrangement of the world. These ideas form a thread of continuity running through his whole life, which forces one to take them seriously, even if they were only paving the way in preparation for his supreme aim. But this wildly tempestuous mixture and juxtaposition of esoteric and exoteric tendencies, some of them serious and real, others merely opportunist or downright hypocritical, does certainly produce a frightful effect.[1] Here one sees a great and noble spirit who has been forced off his natural path, his whole organism distorted and deformed, because he no longer has a chance of bringing it to a complete state of inner truth and unity. To a certain extent, this was the case previously with Boccalini, and to an even greater degree it was what happened to the great Venetian Servite monk, Fra Paolo Sarpi, who was forced to conceal his Protestant sympathies. 'I wear a mask', said Sarpi, 'but I am forced to do so, for no one can live safely in Italy without one.' [2] In his poems Campanella took off this mask on one occasion, when he said that 'those who are wise but powerless are forced to speak, to act and to live like fools, though in their secret heart they have other thoughts'.[3] He was forced to writhe and twist even more violently than Sarpi under the pressure of the world which was hostile to him—not only because this world persecuted him more harshly, but because he himself wanted to bring it under the spell of his ideas and make it an instrument of his plans. But in the process he himself could not entirely escape the intellectual influence of the Catholic and Spanish system. While he represents one of the most impressive victims of the Latin Counter-Reformation, he was at the same time one of its most effective servants and pioneers. The same man, who stood out for Galileo and the freedom of scientific inquiry, and was kept in prison by Spain and

[1] A. Doren, *Camp. als Chiliast und Utopist* (*Kultur- und Universalgeschichte, Festschrift für W. Goetz*, 1927, p. 255), rightly stresses Campanella's psychology of ecstasis, but gives an incorrect picture of my own interpretation of C.

[2] Rein, *Paolo Sarpi und die Protestanten*, 1904, p. 205.

[3] Amabile, *Camp. ne'castelli di Napoli 2* (*Narrazione*), 167. Also offers further evidence of the same.

the Curia, also forged intellectual weapons for the war against heretics, and they were weapons which the Papacy could make good use of. It has been conjectured (not without probability) that his advice helped to induce Pope Gregory XV to found the Congregation of the Propaganda.[1] Scioppius, one of the most violent converts and persecutors of heretics in Germany, listened attentively to the stimulating voice of Campanella, and learnt a lot from him. And when Campanella fomented hatred against Protestantism, he did not do so merely out of a calculating subservience to Rome, but he also felt this hatred himself, dominated as he was by a remarkable mixture of libertarian sentiments and religious feelings inspired by Roman Catholicism. These feelings could boil up in him momentarily in such a way that, in the very work which was supposed to be combatting heresy, he would confess his own former sins and assert his present Catholic faith in violently emotional terms which bear witness to the genuineness of the experience.[2]

But in doing so he did not desert his ideal of the Sun State, which contains a certain spirit, if not exactly of heathenism, yet nevertheless of a deistic religion of Nature and Reason with only a breath of Christianity.[3] For this reason he offers one of the greatest psychological riddles in the modern history of human thought—and a riddle which up to now has never been fully solved.

Perhaps his dividedness becomes somewhat more intelligible if one connects it with the problem we are treating; for the case of Campanella does absolutely belong, as we have already said, to the history of *ragione di stato*.[4] Just as Machiavellism (with the *ragione di stato* to which it led) opened up a rift in the historical life of modern nations which would never again be closed up, so it was also capable of introducing a duality into the lives of those men who became deeply

[1] Kvačala, *Campanella*, p. 137 f.

[2] In the *Volumen quadripartitum: Quod reminiscentur*, etc. (which dates from 1617–18), Kvačala, *Th. Camp. u. Ferdinand II, loc. cit.*, pp. 32 ff., detects the confession of guilt: ". . . *misericordiam consequutus sum, cum essem derisor vanitate et scandalo vastans Ecclesiam tuam. . . . Fac me domine de Saulo Paulum*', etc. In spite of this admission, Blanchet, *loc. cit.*, 92, does not believe that Campanella ever became a good Catholic again. But he himself then invokes, on pp. 102 ff. and 487, the psychology of the Catholic modernist who, in spite of an intellectual resistance to dogma, cannot really free himself from the Church. Campanella's ecstatic nature makes a temporary regret and remorse seem quite possible.

[3] Kvačala, *loc. cit.*, 12, quotes a remark from a letter of C. to Scioppius dated 1st June 1607, showing him to be a self-confessed heathen: 'Even if he is not really Christian, yet as a philosopher he loves God in a natural way,' etc. The words are wrongly translated; the sentence runs: '*Nam etsi nulla tenus Christianus essem, tamen velut philosophus naturaliter amo Deum*, etc.' Amabile, *Th. C. ne'castelli di Napoli*, 2, 62.

[4] This problem is only touched upon by Blanchet, pp. 473 and 521.

involved in it intellectually. We have seen how Boccalini struggled against it with the feeling of being faced with an inescapable power. Let us now examine more closely the way in which we suggest Campanella was related to it.

His whole tactical plan of covering up his own revolutionary attempt with a book on the Spanish Monarchy, and then also of filling this book with material which was serious and had a practical value, and of serving Spain one day and France the next, while at the same time always working for Papal world-dominion—what is all this but a *ragione di stato* of his own? This course of action (and no other) was imperative for the creator of the Sun State, in order to bring the world gradually into the path he wanted. He felt that he was faced with the vital problem of how to add—to the 'wisdom without power' (*senno senza forza*) which he already possessed—the power which was required to establish that triple union of 'power, wisdom and love', for which he longed. He had to try and calculate and make use of the existing material and political forces, and make them move in the direction needed for the construction of his Sun State. He had to act in accordance with Machiavelli's teaching, and yet hate his theory, because it was the theory of Earth, of coldness and egoism, because it divided men in hate and enmity, instead of uniting them in harmony. This man, who (as we shall now show) was more fiercely opposed to Machiavelli than any of his contemporaries, nevertheless borrowed so much from him in his thought and action (half consciously and half unconsciously) that, by one moment opposing *ragione di stato* and the next moment making use of it, he finished by making this idea into the dynamic focus of his whole system of politics.

It was in opposition to Machiavelli that Campanella's own political thought developed. He attacked him again and again. He remarked that one of his principal works—the *Atheismus triumphatus*, which was written in 1605, and published in Rome in 1631 and Paris in 1636 [1]—could also have borne the title Anti-Machiavellism. It was of course almost self-evident that he should not entirely understand Machiavelli and should fail to recognize his final positive aims, directed towards the building up of the State and the regeneration of civic virtue, because this was not properly understood before the growth of the modern conception of history. But he was able to raise objections against certain basic positions of Machiavelli's and against the practical consequences of his theory; and these objections are perhaps the most important of all those which were voiced against Machiavelli during the earlier period. It is true that they have to be extracted from amongst a great deal of padding and crude theological polemic which is also there; and in general it is necessary to separate the foreground of precise

[1] Cf. Amabile, *Camp. ne'castelli di Napoli*, 1, 414, and Kvačala, *Campanella*, 92.

theological argumentation from the background of his own most personal and vital tendencies, which rebelled against Machiavelli.

But one had to begin with the foreground. It is a question here of one of the most important phenomena of that period—one which had already been much deplored and opposed by Botero and his followers, but which Campanella treated with much greater violence. Machiavellism dissolved the sentiments of creed and endangered all the achievements of the Counter-Reformation. For it turned religion into an instrument of political domination, into a source of power, which was indeed indispensable, but which was thought of primarily as utilitarian. Obviously all the religiously-inclined politicians immediately accused the heretical rulers of the sin of Machiavellism, and refused to admit that these rulers were guided by any religious motives. This was how Campanella felt too. But he looked deeper, and also put the feelings of the Catholic rulers to the test of criticism. For how far could one really rely on the sincerity of their religious feelings? Were there any guarantees that they would still remain loyal to these feelings, if once the system of their power-interests ceased to be inseparably bound up with the system of the Church of Rome? This was a very ticklish question which even the modern historian can only answer affirmatively with any certainty in individual cases; Campanella ventured to treat it with the greatest scepticism, and in the opinion which he expressed to the Catholic zealot Scioppius one can catch a glimpse of his own deliberately repressed freedom of thought: 'No one believes the Bible or the Koran or the Gospel or Luther or the Pope, except in so far as it is useful.' [1] 'Almost all rulers are Machiavellian politicians, and make use of religion only as a governmental device.' It was his opinion that particularly in Germany one was forced to admit that power-interest had triumphed over religion, because there the governing principle was *cujus regio eius religio*. It was only on political grounds that the German rulers believed, either in the Pope, or in Luther. If they changed their religion, then the subjects had to change theirs too—just as if religion were a pair of boots or a hat! [2] He was mistaken about the historical causes which had brought about the troublesome compromise of the religious Peace of Augsburg. But he recognized with an acute instinct that its consequences were liable to benefit religious indifferentism.

Campanella was very fond of bracketing together the epithets 'politician', 'Machiavellian' and 'libertine'. The epithet '*Politique*' had certainly been used in France, ever since the time of the Huguenot Wars, to refer to the Catholic and patriotic statesmen who, in the interests of the nation and the State, had tried to impose moderation on every kind of creed. 'Libertine' applied at first only to those free-thinking tendencies

[1] To Scioppius, 1st June 1607. Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 58.

[2] *Le monarchie delle nationi* (1635), Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 310.

in Western Europe which were freeing themselves from dogma. Both terms broadened their connotation, and in fact came to be used quite freely at the turn of the century to apply to realistic politicians who, though apparently religious, were lukewarm and unfeeling. Particularly in Holland the reproach of libertinism was levelled at the State party of rich patricians, which was led by Oldenbarneveldt.[1] The tendency towards tolerance and scepticism, which was present there, became one of the most important initial stages in the great European movement of the Enlightenment. But in the sentiments of these West-European 'politicians', the intellectual currents of *raison d'état*, tolerance and scepticism now began to fuse together completely. It was true that many States, and even enlightened political minds like Boccalini, were still capable of looking on intolerance, and the maintenance of a religious uniformity among the subject masses, as an inexorable necessity of State. But yet, already during the period of the religious wars, there had been some premonitory signs of an entirely new attitude, which consisted in being tolerant for motives of State interest. And Campanella, in his Spanish prison at Naples, had an acute sensibility for these changes in the intellectual and national life of Europe. 'The politicians consider', he wrote in *Atheismus triumphatus*, 'that because there are so many religions no single one of them is true, but that they all constitute a useful human invention'.[2] As if there could be no pure wine, because the publican adulterated the wine. Indeed, the multiplicity of sects was already beginning to offer a source of satisfaction to the minds of the powerful.[3]

But behind the unity of the one true Roman Catholic religion—which he officially defended, and by doing so sought to defend himself against his persecutors—there also lay his own most deeply personal ideals. The utilitarian interpretation and degradation of religion made him indignant, because his philosophy saw in religion something profoundly natural, something which belonged to all living creatures, even in a certain degree to the beasts, most of all perhaps something with which God and Nature had endowed mankind.[4] But his demand for unity of religion arose from the great and passionate need for unity which determined the manner in which he conceived the world and gave to his philosophy its initial impulse. One of the basic ideas of his philosophy and his view of nature was that all things (and, correspondingly, individuals too) were possessed of a dual motion—on the

[1] Blok, *Geschichte der Niederlande*, 3, 380 f., 481. [2] P. 94.

[3] From the preface to *Atheismus triumphatus*, written in Rome in 1630.

[4] *At ego ostendi, ipsam Religionem naturae decretis constare apud omnia Entia modo suo, et apud bestias aliquo pacto, sed longe veriori apud homines, sed insuper supernaturaliter perfectam apud Christianos, etc. Atheismus triumphatus*, p. 227; cf. also the *praefatio* thereto, and the letter to Scioppius of 1st June 1607, *loc. cit.: Religio virtus naturalis a Deo in nobis indita.*

one hand striving for themselves, on the other hand striving for the sake of the whole.[1] The fact that Machiavelli had only appeared to be conscious of one of these forms of motion, namely the egocentric form, was the real reason for hating him. Campanella called him the vessel of divine wrath, and cried to him:

> 'Thou, who lovest the Part more than the Whole,
> And thinkst thyself more than all Mankind,
> Thou clever Fool.' [2]

'This is the sum of that political reason which our Anti-Christian century calls *ratio status*—that one should value the part more than the whole, and value oneself more than the human race, more than the world, and more than God.' Like worms in a cheese, men believed that nothing else existed apart from the cheese.[3] It was Machiavelli's belief (according to the view of Campanella) that men's achievements were entirely due to the impulse towards power and domination. He knew only what was visible to the outward eye, and believed that men conducted human affairs by the exercise of their own free will and took human cunning as a basis for justice. His advice was to conform to one's times, i.e. to move with fate. But what was fate? *Fatum est series causarum.*[4] A profound statement, but one which Campanella had not quite come to understand in a purely mechanistic sense; for then he might easily have lapsed into Machiavellism himself. He looked upon the causal chain as anchored in a *prima causa*, in God; and he required that in everything, even in political affairs, one should take into account the totality of things and of events and their ultimate source in God. 'If we were not under the influence of any cause, then there would be some meaning, Machiavelli, in what you say. But all our plans will go astray, if we do not take into account *every single* cause; and so you are deceiving yourself, and for this reason all your disciples too will come to grief.' Machiavelli then was not conscious of the great world relationship in which heaven and earth were working together to produce everything which happened; and whoever was not conscious of this, was reasoning from false premises. It was here that Campanella rose to a great mystical and universal view of the historical process, in which human action appeared only as a small dimly-lit part of the universal development. States were not ruled by Man alone; for there were in operation invisible causes and hidden possibilities, which lay beyond the reach of human foresight. 'Not only the great primary

[1] Windelband, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 3rd ed., 1, 85.
[2] Gothein, *Th. Campanella, Zeitschr. f. Kulturgeschichte*, N.F.1, 81 (1894).
[3] To Scioppius, 1st June 1607, *loc. cit.*
[4] *Atheismus triumphatus*, p. 229.

entities, but also human and political entities are guided and actuated (so long as we remain on Earth) by causes which are insuperable and at the same time mutually contradictory.' [1]

In this way he played off the great universalism against the small egoism, but at the same time he did not miss any opportunity of using the arguments against Machiavellism which lay to hand. It was Campanella's view that the immoral element in political conduct was extending its influence and corroding all the foundations of social life. And if this were so was it still possible at all for father and children, for man and man, to live together in communion? In fact, Machiavelli was not concerned with anything save the cunning of the flesh, i.e. of the beasts, and he looked upon power and domination as the highest ethical good. In agreement with Botero, Mariana [2] and the other religiously inclined political theorists, he demanded that religion should constitute the true soul of politics.

If we turn aside from the individual misunderstandings and crudities of Machiavellian theories, and strip off the layer of mediaeval thought which covered all Campanella's own theories, we are left with the remarkable contrast between the two great attitudes which it was possible to adopt towards the modern world, life and the State—two attitudes which, from the time of the Renaissance, unfolded (to use Campanella's own words) like two 'insuperable and yet at the same time mutually contradictory causes'. Machiavelli started out from the empirical observation of individual vital uniformities, and went on to concentrate his attention on the task (which he deliberately isolated) of discerning the presuppositions and requirements of political conduct. This led him to discover *necessità*, the constraining force of power interest in political conduct, which could even contravene the moral law. In doing so he freed the political sphere from all unpolitical restrictions, but he thereby created antinomies and conflicts in the collective life of humanity; he did not trouble himself further about these, because he rigidly refused to see anything except his own goal and stopped his ears against any unpolitical considerations. This was the grandiose one-sidedness, which now, after the collapse of the unified mediaeval culture, enabled all the different provinces of life gradually to re-conquer their autonomy and freedom of movement, and thereby become capable of unlooked-for achievement. But at the same time this very one-sidedness kindled a conflict between the various provinces of life which came to threaten the whole living community and eventually became the problem of modern humanity.

So there was considerable justification for Campanella's counter-

[1] *Discorso politico* of 1632; Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 188 and 212.

[2] The fact that even Mariana borrowed from Machiavellism, is shown by Dunning, *A history of political theory from Luther to Montesquieu* (1905), p. 74 f.

claim that it was not permissible to divide off politics completely from human life as a whole. His idea that every subordinate province of human life should be looked at and dealt with *sub specie aeterni* and in a cosmic context, was all the greater and more fruitful; indeed it amounted to a presentiment of genius, of something which was later seen by Vico, Herder, Goethe and Hegel, and at the same time it was not yet finally emancipated from the mediaeval universalist mode of thought. Even the ideal picture of a human community which he portrays in his Sun State had a Janus head, being half mediaeval, half modern, and exhibiting the features of mediaeval theocracy, but in a somewhat naturalized form. The priestly ruler at its apex was nothing else but a reflection of the Papacy with its Papal State and its claim to the office of supreme arbitrator, and went back in the last analysis to Augustine's ideal conception of a *magnus sacerdos* who would represent in his person the unity *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. And a penetrating hierarchic and even monastic spirit ran right through the institutions which he thought up for his Sun State—even reaching as far as the sexual regulations which sprang from a fantasy that was monastically, sensually and at the same time ascetically inspired. But the hierarchy of the ruling class in the Sun State was founded, not on a system of caste separation, but on wisdom and capability, and on an original equality of rights between all the members of the whole body. The really modern ideas of a bond between science and labour, of work directed by rational knowledge, and of a general obligation to work which united together the members and the whole body—these were the ideas that were here struggling to the surface. Under its Utopian guise, the Sun State was setting up the idea of a real community in opposition to the idea of the power State. Ever since then, the life of Western humanity has been inspired by both ideas.

But now it became a question of indicating the practical paths which would lead away from the egoism of *ragione di stato* and towards the social solidarity of the Sun State. We have already suggested that Campanella looked on the political power relationships of his time as a raw material which he wished to shape—not indeed straight away into the Sun State, for his ideas were not quite so fantastic as that, but certainly into whatever preliminary stage leading towards it would be possible at the time. But what in fact happened in the process was that the evil enemy of Machiavellism, against which he was bitterly struggling, gained and held possession over him himself from the very first.[1]

Of all the political writings of Campanella, the *Aforismi politici* (which he wrote in 1601) approach perhaps most closely to the ideal of

[1] This has been pointed out, but not analysed any further, by Kovalewsky, *Botero et Campanella, Annales d'Institut international de sociologie*, III (1897).

his Sun State, which he portrayed one year later.[1] One finds there, for example, the glorification of the priest-king, the rational selection of talents to be undertaken by the wisest in the State, a repudiation of the system of inheriting official posts (even including that of the kingship), etc. One finds there too, of course, the customary invective against *ragione di stato*. But, clashing sharply with this, one encounters the crudest Machiavellisms, as for instance the following statement lifted straight from the *Principe:* 'Whoever acquires a new kingdom . . . must cause all heads to be bowed, change the laws, demolish the fortifications, destroy the royal stock, and all this at one fell swoop on the very day of victory, executed in the name of the soldiers and of the military commander and done by their hand; but the beneficial acts he must then do, not all at once, but little by little after the victory, and he must bestow them in his own name and by his own hand.' In order to defend a realm, one must foster division and hatred amongst the forces one has reason to fear, as the Spaniards did between the Turks and the Persians, and amongst the barons of their rival France. Indeed, even religion need not be preserved, if its influence is opposed to a '*natural* system of politics'. When the Jews who would not fight on the Sabbath were defeated, the Maccabean conclusion was that 'in time of *necessità* one always had to fight'.

Perhaps it was precisely the universalist frame of mind in which Campanella carried on the struggle against the egoism of *raison d'état*, that forced him to a certain unwilling appreciation of the fact that *raison d'état* was itself a universal phenomenon, and that it would continually crop up in the life of humanity. This perception is already dominant in one of his first political writings, the *Discorsi politici ai principi d'Italia*, which he wrote before his rebellion. Amongst the great cultural innovations, good as well as bad, which had spread throughout the world from ancient Babylon—besides military science, astronomy, despotism, the liberal and scientific arts—he also distinguished by name *ragione di stato*. He tried, too, to understand more deeply the boundless impulse of rulers towards power and conquest, and to find some metaphysical foundation for this. 'It proceeds from God Eternal, and only in the Eternal can it come to rest once more.' [2] From the outset he had been fully acquainted with the art, as taught by Machiavelli, of calculating the play of political interests. He knew what was meant by a policy of the balance of power, and he saw Europe continuing to live under a double tension—a great world-opposition, on the one hand, between Turk and Hapsburg, and on the other between Hapsburg and Frenchman. He remarked, for example, that the Italian rulers were now trying

[1] *Opere* (edited by Ancona), 2, 11 ff. Regarding the date of origin, cf. Amabile, *Campanella, La sua congiura*, etc., 3, 656.

[2] *Discorsi politici*, pp. 2 and 4. What follows is also taken from them.

to assist France to balance Spain, just as they would do the exact opposite, if Spain were to decline and France become powerful. Moreover they would not have had any success against Spain, if it were not that the House of Austria was opposed by heretics in Germany, and by the Turks in Hungary and at sea. It was for this reason that some considered the Turkish rule to provide a useful barrier against the House of Austria, which would otherwise have ruled the whole of Europe.

But he now also carried on a fundamental struggle against this whole political system of self-interest and the balance of power. The wars and dissensions in Europe had made possible the growth of Turkish power. If it had not been for the war with France, Charles V would have conquered a great part of the Turkish Empire, but he was impeded by French envy and Italian fear. Whilst the frog is fighting with the mouse, the vulture comes and devours them both. All the smaller powers of the ancient oriental world, who formerly tried to balance each other according to *ragione di stato*, were swallowed up by Assyria, and so were the Greek Diadochi by Rome. Was it not a piece of good fortune for the Greeks that Alexander the Great became their ruler and was able to conquer the barbarians, whereas they would otherwise have been defeated by the barbarians?

In his view, therefore, *ragione di stato* taught 'pernicious arts'. In order to understand his unfavourable criticism, one must remember that it was from the point of view of a South Italian that he was judging the European situation. In his immediate vicinity he saw only, on the one hand, the petty and sickly relationships of the Italian rulers, and on the other hand the world-embracing power of Spain. In spite of his hatred for the Spaniards, his sense for what was historically great and powerful (a sense that broke through all his fantastic ideas) could not hesitate for one moment about the question of which was the stronger vital force. Further off, he saw the Turkish power like a dark cloud drawing nearer and nearer. The coasts of South Italy trembled before the Turkish fleets and pirates; and the Turkish armies, which were breaking out of Hungary, were at that time only held back with the greatest difficulty. In the Mediterranean, as the naval battle of Lepanto had shown, it was only the Spanish power that to a certain extent gave real protection. In this respect Campanella, like Boccalini, was held fascinated by the sight of the diabolical relationalism which ruled in the military and State affairs of Turkey; and it was with a simultaneous feeling of horror and interest that he studied the governmental devices which might perhaps be borrowed from there. So it came about that, from the point of view of world history, he made a comparison between the situation of Europe and that of Greece at the time of Alexander the Great. From a way of thought and a philosophy of history which were both universal, and from Christian traditions of universalism, but also at the same time out

of a dark faith in the stars and a belief in biblical prophecies and predictions of things to come, there grew in him a kind of *amor fati*, which above all set everything on a unification of Christendom under Spain and the Papacy. It seemed to him inescapable destiny that the world was now passing under Spanish domination. But at the same time he wanted to outwit this destiny, and make use of the Spanish world-domination as a preliminary step towards the Sun State. We have already seen that besides this lofty calculation a baser personal one was also operating. In some such way is it possible to imagine the inception of his remarkable book on the Spanish monarchy.

This book presents a kind of *raison d'état* and theory of self-interest for a universal monarchy. Theory of self-interest requires a man with an inductive and empirical mind, who will first recognize precisely what is actually the case, before he finally forms his ideas about what ought to be the case and what should be aimed at. Now, in spite of all the wealth of knowledge he had gained from Machiavelli, Campanella was certainly not one of these. He was more conscious of himself as a creative and constructive spirit, than as capable of investigation and research. He felt in himself the gifts of a Numa and a Lycurgus, and wanted to shape the world according to reason. But his interests were so universal and his fantasy was so productive, that the picture of national and State life which he carried in his head was a very rich one, and he was often capable of utilizing even very small fragments of knowledge with great genius. Yet it is certainly often true that he antagonizes by his childish rationalism, thinking to shape the life of States by means of a few cunningly thought out little tricks. His recommendations are frequently reminiscent of the ridiculous advice about how to catch lions in the desert.[1]

The most profound and significant idea which runs through this rather remarkable book is certainly this: that a universal monarchy carried by a ruling nation cannot in the long run be supported solely by the powers of the people of that nation; it has also got to make a rational use of the subject peoples, and must satisfy them and give them an interest in the continuance and stability of the whole. Every well-organized universal monarchy must loosen the original core of government in some way, amalgamate with the elements that come in to join it, and in this way also change these elements themselves and assimilate them to each other, if it is to create social communities which will

[1] One example may suffice. In order to conquer the Dutch, he counsels that a Spanish commander should appear to go over to the Dutch; that he should acquire influence with them and then lead the troops back to Spain, after the example of Sinon before Troy, etc. (ch. 27). The same advice appeared in the smaller book, *De Belgio subigendo*, which was a precursor of the larger work on the Spanish Monarchy and was incorporated in it. Cf. Kvačala, *Campanella*, p. 15.

sustain a world kingdom. This was what happened in the monarchy of Alexander and in the Roman Empire. It was the example of the Romans,[1] just as much as contemporary observations, that led Campanella to these ideas. As an Italian, who believed in the essential superiority of his people, he had to aspire to a share for it in the general system of government, in order to make Spanish rule endurable. Moreover he shrewdly discerned the weakest point in the Spanish governmental system, the scanty and over-worked man-power of the people, the decline in population and the decay of agriculture. And he finally came to the view that the Turks with their institution of Janissaries had found the proper method of transfusing the blood of foreign nations into one's own. His Sun State shows how very much concerned he was with the problem of eugenics. He thus succeeded in emphasizing questions of population which would have been quite outside the reach of a Machiavelli, and were now gradually indicating the increasing significance of the peoples in the life of the State. The particular methods which he suggested were for the most part violent and unrealistic, only comparable in history to the wicked and harmful expulsion of the Moors from Spain under Philip II. He ventured to assert that the inhabitants of newly conquered countries, which had a different religion and a different form of government, would have to be carried off by force and held as slaves; their children would have to be baptized and transplanted to the New World. His advice to the Spaniards (which for them was certainly difficult to carry out) was that they should completely re-arrange their colonial system; and that the hoard they amassed in the New World should be one of people rather than gold and silver. In addition one would have to set up seminaries, in order to facilitate intermarriage between Spaniards and Italians, Frenchmen and Dutchmen. In saying this, he certainly had in mind the arrangements in their own church for seminaries and orders (both of which were particularly flourishing just at this time) which aimed at impressing a unified supra-national spirit on youths of quite different nations. Indians should be brought to Spain, in order to provide peasants and artisans. But Italians too should be sent to Spain and to other countries ruled by Spain, in order that they could hold high office together with the Spaniards. Altogether, the Spanish tendency towards exclusiveness would have to be relaxed, and the Spanish system of government would have to accommodate itself better in every way to national peculiarities. At the same time of course it would have to protect itself carefully against these very peculiarities by means of a policy of *divide et impera*, for which he once more relied to a great extent on Machiavelli's advice.

Since Campanella wished to make use of the Spanish universal monarchy as a preliminary step towards the Sun State, it would have

[1] He has recourse to them in the *Aforismi politici* no. 44.

to become more than a mere power organization. In this respect, many echoes from world history combined to enrich his political imagination. He wrote once to the Archduke of Austria: 'Alexander and all the others, who tried to rule the whole world, undertook at the same time to win over the world by means of wondrous new theories and new arts.' [1] The Spanish military State must therefore also become a cultural State—by means of a division of labour which would not only serve the interests of *raison d'état*, but also satisfy the cultural needs of the human spirit. That is to say, within the mingled population of their realm, the Spaniards should reserve for themselves the function of constituting a ruling warrior class; while training themselves in an efficient use of weapons, they should at the same time also cultivate seriously the various arts and sciences. On the contrary, the subject peoples, and those which are still in the process of being subdued, should be occupied exclusively with the arts and sciences; this will tend simultaneously to win them over, pacify them and render them harmless. For 'Pallas vanquished Calliope and Mars at the same time, by simultaneously disposing of the arts of the one and the weapons of the other' (chap. 29). From the point of view of the interests of a universal monarchy this was fairly apposite; and it is somewhat reminiscent of certain notions entertained by the nations that rule the world today who, when they disarmed Germany, still wanted to leave her the consolation of being able to write books.

Campanella also had a strong presentiment of what might be achieved among modern nations by a union between science and militarism. He demanded that Spain should inaugurate a geographical and astronomical investigation on the largest possible scale, and get German and Dutch mathematicians to pursue research on the constellations, the depth and currents of the sea and the navigability of all sea routes, since this would be more advantageous to the Spanish monarchy than any other measure (ch. 32). In the last resort his supreme ideal was still not the rational power State; it was the pure cultural State, founded on social community and justice, and governed by philosophers and idealistic interests. It was his intention that the rational power State should form a preparation for the cultural State. This idea too—which he did not actually express, but which may be inferred from the totality of his thought—may be accounted to him as an important presentiment of future developmental tendencies. But neither in his portrayal of the power State of the Spanish universal monarchy, nor in the picture he painted of his own Sun State, was he ever able to escape the limitations of that primitive rationalism which strove to change everything into a clockwork mechanism.

Was it also perhaps the excitement and anxiety of the great national

[1] Kvačala, *Campanella und Ferdinand II*, *loc. cit.*, 37.

war between East and West which forced him into the arms of the Spanish monarchy and hence into the train of ideas that made up the hated *ragione di stato?* But in this respect too he was always a grandiose dreamer, for he over-estimated the dangers which threatened from the East. He issued a warning that, if the Christian rulers did not range themselves now under Spain and the Papacy, in order to conquer Turkey together, then the Turk would achieve mastery, and *imperium* and *sacerdotium* would have to emigrate from Europe to the New World. On another occasion he predicted with the staring eye of Cassandra that the Christian world would just as surely fall into the hands of the Turks as Judah into the hands of Assyria. It would happen 'out of a necessary *ragione di stato*, by reason of a theological portent (*per figure teologica*) and on account of a natural similarity, *quia de similibus simile judicium*—and even the politicians believe it', he added ironically.[1]

It should be noted that Campanella's project was not for a purely Spanish universal monarchy, but for one which was both Spanish and Papal. In the Sun State the office of priestly ruler, to whom are subordinated the leaders of worldly life, Pon, Sin and Mor (i.e. Power, Wisdom and Love), would in his view have to be prepared for by the relationship in which Spain stood towards the Papacy—whereas in the opposite sense (as we already noted) the imaginative picture of the Sun State reflects the old mediaeval and religious conception of the relationship between spiritual and mundane power. In direct contradiction to the tendency of Philip II towards bringing the national church under the influence of the State, he demanded complete independence for the church within the State; moreover he demanded that worldly power should be subordinated to the authority of the Pope, and that the Pope too should possess mundane power. A favourite idea of his, which he had already expressed in his *Discorsi* to the Italian rulers and which he was to repeat over and over again in later writings, was that of founding a Catholic Union of nations; this would have a senate sitting in Rome under the presidency of the Pope, which would reach its decisions by a majority vote, and which would govern Catholic Europe (or at least, Italy) by means of a single military force depending on it alone.[2]

It is a remarkable thing to see how, in the feelings and imagination of this Calabrian monk of the Baroque period, there were tangled together so many ideas and wishes—mediaeval and modern, exoteric and esoteric, idealistic and opportunist, ideas of universal history, of universal man and ideas which were quite provincial. For this regen-

[1] *Discorsi politici*, p. 11; cf. *Span. Monarchie*, ch. 30.

[2] Kvačala, *Campanella*, pp. 105, 107, 113; Amabile, *Campanella ne' castelli di Napoli*, 2, 86, 171.

erator of humanity, who wished to free it from the scourge of Machiavellism, the Kingdom of Naples was still the centre of the world.[1] He wanted to set free humanity in his oppressed countrymen, and yet he could find no other tool to do it with, except the hated *ragione di stato*. In the process of living he learnt to use it with increasing adroitness and subtlety. In Rome he came into contact with the political world, and particularly with the French embassy. The political writings of his last decade, written either here or after his flight from Italy into France in 1634, show indeed far less naïvety in their political recommendations, while at the same time they exhibit a much greater degree of knowledge about the world and about States, much more grasp and acuteness. It was not for nothing that he came within the ambit of Richelieu's policy. But it remains doubtful why and to what extent Richelieu valued and protected this remarkable refugee—whether only as a great philosopher, warmly welcomed by French scholars, or whether perhaps also as a mind gifted (despite all his fantasy) with acute powers of political discernment. At any event, the political treatises of this period (which at that time remained unpublished) give the impression of having been written for the eyes of Richelieu and his followers.[2]

Let us first attempt to see clearly the change of events which they reflect.

When his *Monarchia hispanica* was published in 1620, twenty-three years after it had been written, it had not become out-of-date in any way; for during the first years of the Thirty Years War the collective power of the Hapsburgs still seemed to be increasing in an irresistible manner. Therefore when this fascinating prediction of all the possible developments in Spanish and Catholic world government made its appearance, the impression it made on contemporaries was a powerful one, either frightening or inspiring; it was puzzling that the author was at that time known to be in a Spanish prison. One must enter into the spirit of a contemporary German reader of the book, if one is to have some idea of the trumpet-blast which it signified. A decade later and the

[1] Cf. especially the *Avvertimento* on the sufferings of Italy, addressed to the Kings of France and Spain, and to the Pope (1628), in Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 168 ff., where he groups the world-history of the previous century around the struggle for Naples; and the remarks in *Le monarchie delle nationi* (1635) in Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 312 and 340.

[2] The fact that Campanella wrote letters from Rome to Father Joseph, the 'Grey Eminence', is proved by Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 1, 501. On Richelieu's relations with Campanella, cf. *ibid.*, 2, 20, 25, 48, 99, 110 f. It also gives the evidence of Christoph v. Forstner, that Richelieu sought C.'s advice on Italian affairs. On the other hand, the fact that payment of the pension granted to him was soon discontinued, argues against any strong interest taken by Richelieu in C.'s personality. Evidence of the political service to French politics which Campanella rendered or strove to render is given in his letter (Kvačala, *C. u. Ferdinand II*, *loc. cit.*, 45 ff.) to the French chancellor Seguier in 1635, which gives a secret report on Spanish propaganda carried on in the monasteries.

tremendous topic was already losing importance; the collective power of the Hapsburgs, though not indeed overthrown, was in many ways seriously threatened. From 1628 onwards, with the War of the Mantuan Succession, things already began to change. France had once more sent an army across the Alps, and thus renewed the old struggle against Spain. But during the following years the Emperor, who had supplied some of his best troops to Italy, lost the fruits of his German victories to the great Swedish heretic-ruler; and there at once grew up between Sweden, France and the German Protestants, an effectual alliance and community of interests, which must have seemed a dazzling victory for *ragione di stato* over all ideals of creed—all the more so when, after the Swedish defeat of Nördlingen in 1634, France strove by exerting her entire might to prevent the rise of the House of Hapsburg which once again threatened to occur.

All these events were very closely followed and interpreted by Campanella, who was always influenced at the same time by the interests of those who protected him. In the Rome of Urban VIII, where he lived from 1626 to 1634, the atmosphere was anti-Spanish; and it was known that the Pope coveted Naples, in order to find a State for his nephew, after the manner of the Renaissance Popes. Campanella shut his eyes to the nepotist element in this desire, and declared in 1628 that it would be a blessing if Naples, which owing to the discord in the Catholic world now threatened to fall a prize to the Turks, should be placed in the hands of the Pope. For that which belonged to the Pope would be the common property of Christendom.[1] He clung to this idea even in the later years, when he took up more and more the *raison d'état* of France. In the background there was always the goal of creating a universal priest-kingship with a strong secular arm.[2]

How different now was his opinion of the essential character of Spanish power. Thirty-seven years separated the first draft of the *Monarchia hispanica* from its counterpart of 1635 (which was under French influence): *Le monarchie delle nationi*.[3] 'At one time I looked on Spain', Campanella confessed in this later book, 'as the servant of the Messiah.' Certainly it was without any profound spiritual upheaval

[1] *Avvertimento*, etc., in Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 170; cf. on the plans of the Pope, Amabile, 1, 277 ff.

[2] Of Campanella's two chief works on the theme of Papal theocracy the early work (according to Amabile, written in 1594) *De Monarchia Christianorum* is lost, while the other, *Monarchia Mexiae*, written in 1605 and printed in 1633, only survives in a few copies and was inaccessible to us. (Cf. Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 1, 335 ff., table of contents in Kvačala, 101 ff., Ferrari, *Corso sugli scrittori politici Italiani*, p. 557, and Lange, *Histoire de l'internationalisme*, I, 390.) Since Campanella was always in the habit of repeating his basic ideas, our investigation could forgo the *Monarchia Mexiae*.

[3] Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 299 ff.

that he now switched his hopes to France; for neither the former nor the latter hopes were based on any real feeling, but only on his scheming imagination. And if prejudice had previously caused him to overestimate the resources of power and the prospects of Spain, yet even then his glance, sharpened by hate, had detected several weak spots in the functioning of the Spanish State. Now he could give free rein to his powers of destructive criticism, and was able to comprehend the causes of Spanish decline—though still not without a certain amount of tendentious distortion, yet on the whole with a distinctness which shows the fertile influence of *ragione di stato* on historical thought.

His principal thesis now was that the astonishing colossus of Spanish power had not grown to its present height by means of its *own* strength; rather, it was the effect of luck and opportunity, of marriages and the amassing of inheritances, and the result of a number of alien, un-Spanish forces. The inventions which had benefited their rise to power a hundred years before, such as firearms, the compass, printing, etc., were not of their discovery. Their engineers and bombardiers were Italians and Flemings, their great military commanders were Italians and Frenchmen and Belgians. Spain was a monster with three heads; the head of essence, namely the Holy Roman Empire; the head of existence, namely Spain proper; and the head of real power (*valore*), that is to say Naples, with its intelligent people, gifted for all the arts of peace and war. That which had shot up to the heights so swiftly and not by its own strength, would also fall down again quickly. He compared Spain to a mountain torrent swollen with rain-water, which for a time rushed along violently, but would be bound to dwindle afterwards. The separate parts of the collective power of the Spanish Hapsburgs, widely separated from one another, were joined by connecting-links like Genoa, the Valtelline and Dunkirk; if these were cut off, the whole system would collapse. And, most of all: the further Spanish rule was extended, the more its population and strength declined. It was on this most fatal point that Campanella concentrated his attention; we already know that he was interested in questions of population. Spain was bleeding to death both in and for her possessions outside Spain. The Spaniards who went off to Italy, to America, to Africa and elsewhere, did not come back home. But there at home the priests and monks made up a powerful army of celibates. In Campanella's opinion the population had fallen from eight millions (surely somewhat of an exaggeration) to barely four millions.[1] After the expulsion of the Jews and Moors, the land they had cultivated lay waste. The Spaniards also depopulated the countries which they ruled, for people fought shy of bringing children into the world who would merely be slaves of Spain.

[1] According to Boissonnade (in Lavisse-Rimbaud, *Histoire générale*, 5, 676) the population at that time fell in half a century from over 8 millions to 6 millions.

They had failed to understand what the Romans with their world-empire had known very well, and what Campanella earlier on had advised them to do: that is to say, make foreign nations Spanish.

Campanella did not yet find himself faced with the great question as to whether this was still at all possible in the modern Western world; and whether perhaps the collective situation of the nations had not already (on account of their special development during the Christian mediaeval period) become too hard and fast for any such amalgamation. Before the awakening of the feeling of historicism, possibilities of this kind were usually treated in a timeless and absolute sense, because human nature was held to be unalterable.

'They do not understand how to make things Spanish, and they do not know how to amass a treasure': in this striking formula he attempted to sum up the essential weaknesses of Spanish world power. His criticism of Spain's economic distresses and delays culminated in the reproach that she had not amassed a State treasure, as all great kingdoms, from Assyria to Venice, had done. The only way in which one could clearly see the development of certain processes was by seizing on one individual symptom, which was apparently simple in form, and emphasizing it in a moralizing manner. Campanella always considered that there was some causal connection at work in the remarkable economic fact, that all the treasures of the Spanish silver-argosies passed swiftly through Spain itself into the neighbouring countries, even into countries which were actually hostile. In Spain, he noted, everything tried to exist on royal gold, and consequently agriculture and trade were neglected.

Thus the Spanish universal monarchy, which he had once pictured to himself with a mixture of hatred and fanciful enthusiasm, and which was to have been a melting-pot for the nations, was a failure. Should the French universal monarchy then quite simply step into its place, and tread the same path that he had mapped out for the Spaniards? Significantly, Campanella had not yet thought about this. His universalist ideal was indeed unshakable, but above all it had to be brought into existence (this had been his wish from the very beginning) by a Papal priest-king. Certainly, in his opinion, France was now called upon to take over the Empire and step into Spain's place as the dominant nation of Christendom—but to do so in a way which would safeguard the individual life of the nations. He hit on the classic phrase, that it was now a question of 'freeing the nations and completely uniting France'. [1] In a moment the mist of universalism parted all at once from before his eyes, and he realized or at least suspected the existence of the two strongest tendencies exemplified in the modern nations: one was towards the development of nations, and the other towards the development of the centralized State.

[1] Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 346.

It is understandable that he did not want to exchange the alien rule of Spain over his homeland for French overlordship. He told the French to their face that, although no nation was better fitted to be mistress of Europe, neither was any nation less fitted for it. It was true that they knew how to win victories and to conquer, but they also soon lost what they had conquered. They might therefore set about it differently. Relying on their strength, they ought to make their own conquests; but then, in order to defend the fruits of victory, they ought to call upon the assistance of the Swiss and the Italians. For the empires that had vanquished the world had always been empires which were tightly bound together, and for France this closeness of union was a more important objective than the subjection of Italy.[1] So, on the banners with which they marched into Italy, they ought to write the device *Libertas Italiae*. They ought to begin by liberating Naples, but then hand over Naples and Sicily to the Pope, who in return could withdraw from Avignon.

Let us quickly pass over these and other mistaken recommendations. They are part of the violent national feeling in Italy which was aroused by the great struggle that broke out between France and Spain in 1635. Similar projects were framed in other places in Italy.[2] It frequently happened in Campanella's time (and it was not peculiar to him) that fantasy and political realism flowed readily into one another. Even his naïve proposal, that the French should take with them on their expedition a 'wise philosopher', who would be able to advise them and point out their mistakes, had some connection with one of the most effective and promising methods of modern statement—a method recommended by Campanella, and used with success by Richelieu and Louis XIV. This was the *guerra spirituale* or *guerra literale*: a summons to preachers and men of letters, a systematic attempt to win over intellectuals of the religious and lay kind for the furtherance of French propaganda. 'Whoever controls men's minds, has the ruling power.' [3]

It will be noticed how everything is uniting at this point in an attempt to reach a new stage in the development of *ragione di stato*. Primitive and peripheral methods and aims of statecraft are replaced (even if not yet completely) by intensive and centralized ones. However improbable it was at that time, the proposed exchange of Naples for Avignon was of very considerable significance. This was expressed a century later by Frederick the Great in his remark that a village on the frontier was

[1] Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 2, 336: '*E qui s'ha d'avvertire ch'al Rè di Francia più utile è haver tutta la Francia unita, che non i Regni e principati sudetti d'Italia; prima perche è più il tener quel ch'è in casa sua, che quel chè fuori etc. 2.° perche sola Francia basta à vincer il Mondo, quando è unita; non solo perche questo conviene à tutti regni uniti per la virtù di Monade*', etc.

[2] Amabile, *loc. cit.*, 1, 286 n.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, 342.

worth more than a whole principality sixty miles beyond. And when considered as a whole, Richelieu's policy is seen to be in accordance with this; inasmuch as it lays more stress on consolidating the core of the homeland and securing good frontiers, than on repeating the adventure of Charles VIII. This was the *virtù di Monade*, which Campanella imputed to the newly-united France. Even in the domestic confusion of the kingdom—in Richelieu's struggles against the Queen-Mother, against the King's brother Gaston d'Orléans, and against the great barons—Campanella's acute political glance saw no trace of weakness, but rather a movement towards stronger centralization of the monarchy. These struggles could (as he said) constitute a *ragione di ristoro*, because they provided an opportunity of attacking the position of governors in the provinces, and of removing any obstacles in the kingdom which stood in the way of power.[1] He recalled the example of ancient Rome where the dissension between nobility and people did in the last resort give new strength to the State. And this had been Machiavelli's opinion also.

Richelieu could therefore pride himself on the fact that his national and political life-work was grasped in its entirety by one of the most profound thinkers of his time, who was moreover a foreigner. Now in the evening of his life the old opponent of Machiavelli came face to face, in Richelieu, with a form of *raison d'état* which completely disarmed him. From the very beginning he had himself, it is true, combated Machiavellism with Machiavellism, and in doing so he had experienced in his own person the constraining force of *ragione di stato*. But he had never been willing to recognize (or at any rate only half-heartedly, in appendices) that *ragione di stato* concealed in itself both Good and Evil at the same time; and that it was capable of assuming various forms, some great and sublime, others mean and hateful. Not even now did he feel this, and he refused to admit that Richelieu could have learnt anything from Machiavelli. The feeling of shame which existed in this century prevented any but the practising cynic from openly praising Machiavelli. Whoever abided by basic principles and was possessed of moral feeling, treated him like a leper. So nothing was left for Campanella to do, but adopt the somewhat banal method of distinguishing common egoism (as taught by Machiavelli) from the State idealism which was now developing with Richelieu, and which would sacrifice itself sublimely for the sake of the Fatherland and of humanity. 'The Machiavellians', as he makes a wise Venetian say, in a dialogue of 1632, 'do not understand such sublimity of spirit as the Cardinal is now showing. They pay more attention to small things than to great, and value themselves more highly than the whole world.' [2]

[1] *Discorso politico* between a Venetian, a Spaniard and a Frenchman (1632) in Amabile, *loc cit.*, 2, 185 ff.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, 2, 199.

Even in spite of all the essential differences between them, Campanella did feel some affinity with Richelieu: the consuming passion for fact, the sacrifice of one's own Ego to some Whole, to the great concerns of humanity. The communist world-reformer paid homage to the founder of French Absolutism, who at the same time was to pave the way for his Sun State. It almost reminds one of the later relationship between Lassalle and Bismarck. But if his eyes had not been covered with the veil of contemporary thought, Campanella might also have been able to discover the great State idealism which already existed in Machiavelli. However, he persisted in thinking that Machiavelli possessed the cunning to understand particular things, but not the wisdom to comprehend the great questions of the destiny of humanity (*le cose fatali*). 'Nor does he know the power of religion.' But religion gives the strength to achieve victory over the world, even if you are crucified in the process.[1] The man who had once known the most terrible fetters of Spain believed in the power of religion and seemed to himself to be a suffering and victorious Messiah.

But was it the case then that Richelieu's policy (which he ranked so far above the customary *ragione di stato*) fulfilled the requirement he had exacted hitherto from all true policy—namely, that it should have religion for its soul? How could this be reconciled with the community of interest, which existed between Richelieu and the Protestant world of Europe and which was publicly fostered by him? Surely this crude Machiavellism was reviled even by the Catholic world, in so far as it ranged itself behind the banner of the House of Hapsburg?

The reply which Campanella made to this was like a grimace. On the principle that attack is the best defence, he accused Spain and Austria of disloyalty to religion; now God had put the heretics round their neck as a punishment. 'Their obedience to the Pope and to their faith depends entirely on whether it is useful to the State.' [2] (We may remember that he made a similar assertion about the Protestant rulers of Germany.) It was not France but the Emperor who was to blame for the campaign of Gustavus Adolphus, for it was he who had left the Empire defenceless and a prey to the Protestants, in order to reinforce the Spaniards in the War of the Mantuan Succession. But France made use of the Swedish King, not as a heretic, but as a powerful instrument to suppress a public nuisance. Thus in war one makes use of irrational but useful beasts, such as horses, camels and elephants. So also David, out of fear of Saul, was useful to the King of Gath; and the Maccabees served Antiochus and Demetrius against their other enemies, *per ragion di stato*. King Francis I made use of the Turks, and Charles V

[1] *Le monarchie delle nationi, loc. cit.*, 2, 322.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, 2, 311.

of the heretics, when they sacked Rome, and quite recently the Huguenots in La Rochelle were supported by the Spaniards.[1]

What were Campanella's feelings when he wrote down this cynical sophistry? He was certainly no ordinary hack-writer, nor was he one of those blind enthusiasts for their own State who are in the habit of weighting down the scales of judgment with unconscious cant. Nor was he a responsible statesman who feels himself obliged to yield to the pressure of the situation, and leaves the conflict between politics and morality to philosophers and theologians. But neither do we wish to impute modern feelings to him, and imagine that there is, in the soul of the philosopher who had fought all his life long against Machiavellism, a burning grief over the duality of his own thought. There was still a great naïvety in people's minds at this time. The dazzling millenarian ideals which he cherished in his breast, the completely contrary contemporary forces with which he had to reckon externally and from which he never entirely separated himself inwardly, and finally the mellowing and weakening effect of the fate he had suffered—all these must be taken into consideration together, if one is to get some idea of how, as unswervingly as a somnambulist (and perhaps also as unconscious of the abysses), he sought the giddy path to his ideal. The men of this time went through life with a kind of primitive certainty, and did not allow themselves to become sicklied o'er by the ultimate consequences of their own thoughts and by the hidden problematic element in all vital forces. It is true that the character of Hamlet was created at this time, but it could scarcely have been understood by contemporaries in quite the same way that modern man has come to understand it. That is what is so great and remarkable about this whole age of the Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-Reformation: that the stupendous ideas which it created sprang from an elemental strength of thought and will, and afterwards came into conflict of their own accord, like forces of Nature, without it being the case that the men in whom these ideas dwelt were thereby wrenched out of their instinctive certainty. *Ragione di stato* was one of the most powerful of these ideas—so powerful that it was even able to control the steps of one who was most completely opposed to it, and this without actually throwing him off the path he was taking, or leading him astray. But equally powerful too were the religious ideas of this time which Campanella upheld in a singular form. The ideas lay side by side, hard and crystalline; and that was what the men were like too.

[1] *Loc. cit.*, 2, 326 f., and *Discorso politico* of 1632, 2, 208.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SPREAD OF THE DOCTRINE OF *RAISON D'ÉTAT* IN ITALY AND GERMANY

WE have already heard that in Italy, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, there were discussions about *ragione di stato* among the porters in the market-place and the artisans in the inns. This showed the tendency of Italians towards political argument and dialectical controversy on the *piazza*. But it also gave some indication of certain deeper processes. The whole age of the Counter-Reformation did indeed betoken a tremendous rebound (though in no sense completely successful) against the spirit of the Renaissance which had begun to secularize life. Men's way of thought was won over again to a respect for those other-worldly values which were administered by the Church—but the new secular values, which the Renaissance had discovered, remained none the less vital. Certainly they were thrust into the background; but in many cases too, where the naked view of them was disturbing, they were only veiled or painted over, and under cover of this were able to continue exerting an influence. It is this kind of painting over of Machiavellism that is exemplified in Botero's doctrine of *ragione di stato*. Machiavelli was now considered an infamous heathen, but the actual practice of courts and statesmen followed in his footsteps. Not altogether, it must be admitted; because the purely utilitarian and basically unbelieving attitude towards Church and religion, which he had adopted, was unendurable, at least for the conscience of natures filled with the new ardour of belief. But the authority of the Church did not rest merely on its inexorably maintained theological doctrine and efficient organization; it also rested on a doctrine of morality and ethical values which encompassed the whole of mundane life, and seemed to create a harmonious and unambiguous union between natural law and the divine command. And so it came about that a conflict, between this doctrine of morality and ethical values (inspired by Christianity and natural law) on the one hand, and the Machiavellian statecraft and

doctrine of ethical values on the other, was absolutely unavoidable and was always having to be decided afresh. Thus one felt oneself torn in two, between the demands of practical politics which tended to force one along the path of Machiavelli, and the doctrines of pulpit and confessional which condemned lies, deception and bad faith. One had recourse, as we have already seen in the example of Botero, to creating a 'good' *raison d'état*, purified and rendered harmless; and the large number of books about *ragione di stato* which were written in Italy during the third and fourth decades of the seventeenth century indicates a passionate interest in this task. These books reflect the whole terrible tension between the traditional and newly invigorated ideals of the religious view of the world, and the growth of the modern State. It was, for the most part, in the many commentaries on Tacitus (which were still undertaken in the manner of Ammirato and Boccalini) that the Machiavellian doctrines lived on—and were frequently expressed there quite baldly; [1] whereas the real theoreticians of *ragione di stato* generally wanted to demonstrate the possibility and beneficial influence of a 'good' *ragione di stato*, as opposed to the *rea* and *cattiva ragione di stato*. But at the same time they had to confess that what the term signified when used in ordinary speech was in fact the evil doctrine, that it was permissible for the ruler to pursue his own interests by any methods, even improper ones.[2]

None of these writers has bequeathed any strong and lasting influence, none of them is more than mediocre; none of them bears inside himself (as Boccalini and Campanella did) a powerful political spirit as well as an ethical spirit, so that the opposition between the two spirits was capable of leading on to deeper problems. For this reason we shall content ourselves, as we did before in the case of Botero, Paruta and Ammirato, with a summary appreciation of their characteristic traits. We may take as a basis for this the writings of Ciro Spontone: *Dodici libri del governo di stato*, 1599; Girolamo Frachetta: *Il Prencipe*, 1599; *Discorsi di stato e di guerra*, 1600; *Seminario de'governi e stati*, 1617 (his book on *Ragione di stato* was not accessible); Antonio Palazzo: *Discorsi del governo e della ragion vera di stato*, 1606; Pietro Andrea Canonhiero: *Dell'introduzione alla politica, alla ragion di stato*, etc, 1, X, 1614; Federico Bonaventura: *Della ragion di stato*, 1623; Lud. Zuccoli: *Dissertatio de ratione status* (this Latin translation, from an Italian original which appeared about 1625, was made by Joh. Garmers of

[1] Cf. on this Ferrari, *Corso sugli scrittori politici d'Italia*, pp. 438 ff., and Toffanin, *Machiavelli e il Tacitismo*.

[2] Palazzo, pp. 9 and 177; Frachetta, *Il seminario de' governi*, etc., p. 81 (he does not distinguish between good and bad types of *raison d'état*, but rather between *vera* and *falsa prudenza civile o politica*, and equates the latter with *ragione di stato*); Settala, p. 11; Chiaramonti, p. 13.

Hamburg in 1663); Gabriel Zinano: *Della ragione degli Stati e*, XII, 1626; Lodovico Settala: *Della ragion di stato*, 1627; Scipione Chiaramonti: *Della ragione di stato*, 1635.[1]

There was a passionate concern to arrive at a precise definition of the true, good *ragione di stato*—a definition which would prove satisfying from a logical as well as an ethical point of view. This task provided an arena where the scholastic passion for intellectual gymnastics and the interest in humanism could be indulged vigorously and untiringly. For this concept for once offered an example of a modern achievement that went somewhat beyond the much-revered realm of antiquity, while yet remaining completely rooted in it and capable of being illustrated with countless examples from it. 'The Greek and Latin languages might well envy us this beautiful expression,' said Bonaventura, the adviser to the Duke of Urbino (p. 664), whose attitude to it altogether was one of ecstatic reverence, and who really devoted his whole big book to the task of defining it. But no one dared to tread even this path without relying on the crutches of antiquity. Assistance could be obtained, first and foremost, from the fifth book of the *Politics* of Aristotle, which dealt with the causes of revolutions and the means for maintaining the constitutional forms of States; with its description of the methods of tyrants (which had already been utilized by Machiavelli) this also reflected the 'bad' *raison d'état*. But then facts and judgments for the thesis were also borrowed copiously from Plato, Thucydides, Plutarch, and especially from Tacitus' History of Tiberius. These examples far outweighed those taken from modern history. Although one can feel clearly in this literature the pulse-beat of concrete contemporary needs, yet it remains true that it was more the work of speculative and sophistical scholars, than of practical politicians.

The phrase might be new, but the thing itself was old—just as old (this was correctly perceived) as the State itself. 'I conclude', said Chiaramonti (p. 489), 'that in the case of a rule by one or many, the good *ragione di stato* came into being with good rulers, and the bad when the rulers were bad.' The bad *ragione di stato* was rooted in an excessive striving for domination, when man wanted (in the phrase of St. Thomas) rather *praeesse quam prodesse*; and since self-love was of prior origin to a love of the common good, it was perhaps older, and certainly more usual, than the good *ragione di stato*.

[1] These and other similar writings are also dealt with in the works by Ferrari and Cavalli quoted earlier (p. 67), and in a Kiel Dissertation of 1922 by Kunkel (unfortunately not published), which chiefly analyses the German literature about *raison d'état* in the seventeenth century. I was grateful to be able to use the MS. The part dealing with the German literature on *raison d'état* is to be found in typescript in the Berlin State Library and in one or two other libraries. Recently Benedetto Croce has also dealt with the writers of *Ragion di Stato* in his valuable treatise, *Il pensiero Italiano nel Seicento* (*La Critica*, XXIV, 3, 1926).

What then was the character of this good *ragione di stato*? We have no intention of sparring with the ten different senses of the word *ragione* which Chiaramonti distinguished, or with the equally numerous meanings of the word *stato* which were in use. We shall content ourselves with observing that the word *stato* now began to be given a greater content; it no longer signified the mere power apparatus of the ruler, but was capable of meaning, as Ammirato had already said (p. 421 in Chiaramonti), *dominio, signoria, regno e imperio* in general. On the whole, *ragione di stato* was now taken to mean statecraft: the good kind was directed towards the general well-being and happiness, by methods acceptable to morality and religion; the bad kind made use of impermissible methods, and was aimed at the special and personal advantage of the rulers. What was felt to be the special element in this art was the 'something hidden and uncommon' that was only vouchsafed to men of great intellectual and spiritual power, wisdom and experience (Bonaventura, p. 38). It is a *virtù superiore*, whose function is to guide, to fashion, to supplement, to grasp comprehensively; in spite of its subordination to moral and divine law, it has authority over the laws of the country, and bears in itself 'the obligation of changing the laws at a given time' and of departing from the written law and from the paths of custom. Ammirato had already paved the way for this proposition of Bonaventura, when he laid it down that *ragione di stato* was nothing else but *contravenzione di ragione ordinaria per rispetto di publico benefitio o vero per rispetto di maggiore e piu universal ragione.*[1] And it was a fairly well chosen group of four things, which Canonhiero declared (p. 574) ought all to be present in any action prompted by *ragione di stato*: (1) the necessity of not being able to act differently, (2) the over-riding of other rights, (3) the public benefit, (4) that one should not be able to give any other reason for what one does, except *ragione di stato* itself. He therefore defined it thus: *La ragione di stato è un necessario eccesso del giure comune per fine di publica utilità.*

And now it is interesting to observe that, over and above the properties which could be discerned by logical and juridical thought, people began to notice something supra-personal, even mystical, in *ragione di stato*. It is like a first trace of modern historical thought in this age which was still so completely permeated with scholasticism and humanism—like a first presentiment of the spiritual personality of the State, when Palazzo felt, in *ragione di stato*, the intelligent spirit of a unified and continuous living creature (p. 28). Bonaventura dug still deeper when he discovered *ragione di stato* to be the *κύριον* of Aristotle, the *vero monarca*, the *principe del principe e la propria e vera sua legge*, the *anima universale del mondo politico,—nihil est, quod non metiatur* (pp. 586 ff.). It may be recalled that, a few years before, Shakespeare too

[1] *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito*, 1594, p. 231.

had discovered the mysticism of the soul of the State. In *Troilus and Cressida* (III, 3), he put into the mouth of Ulysses the words:

> There is a mystery (with whom relation
> Durst never meddle) in the soul of state,
> Which hath an operation more divine
> Than breath or pen can give expressure to.

Had Shakespeare perhaps already heard of the new fashionable theory of *ragione di stato*? At any rate he knew something of the 'statists'—the name given to those experienced in practical politics and *ragione di stato*.[1] This passionate sense of being on the track of some great and powerful vital principle has about it something touching, when one meets with it in these mediocre Italian writers. One of them, Mirandula, in his *Ragionamento di stato*, even went so far as to work out the particular *raison d'état* of God Himself.[2]

It was particularly fruitful then, that Bonaventura should also derive the different forms of the State from the different kinds of *raison d'état* which obtained at various times. For he took *raison d'état* to be prior to the form of the State, and to be the causative one of the two, and not the other way round. But now, by means of this recognition that *ragione di stato* differentiated itself in the various forms of the State, they got back once more onto the path trodden out by Aristotle; and they were able to make use of the schema he drew up, of the three good and three bad forms of the State, to help solve the problem of *raison d'état*. The first to do this was Ludovico Zuccoli of Ancona; his enthusiasm for the unpolitical idyll of San Marino [3] did not prevent him from writing the shortest, but most pregnant work on the subject. He adopted the clear and simple (though admittedly also somewhat narrow) point of view, that *raison d'état* was nothing else but the knowledge and application of the means for establishing and maintaining a particular State form. To act in accordance with *ragione di stato* therefore meant, to do whatever corresponded to the essence and form of the particular *stato* one wanted to have. Consequently there existed a special *ragione di stato* for monarchy, one for tyranny, and one for each of the other State forms. It was not then (as he pointed out in opposition to Ammirato) altogether an essential part of the character of *raison d'état* that it should be at variance with the laws. That might well happen on occasion, namely, in the case of bad forms of the State;

[1] *Hamlet* (V, 2) and *Cymbeline* (II, 4); cf. John, *Geschichte der Statistik*, p. 10 f. My colleague, Aloys Brandl, believes it to be quite possible that it was the Italians living in England who spread the new theory there.

[2] Ferrari, *Corso*, etc., p. 395. I did not have access to Mirandula's book.

[3] Cf. Ferrari, *Corso*, etc., pp. 510 ff. The importance of Zuccoli is also stressed by Croce (*loc. cit.*, p. 158), but his basic attitude to the problem of *raison d'état* differs from my own.

whereas, on the contrary, with the good State forms the laws and *raison d'état* would dwell in harmony together. In general, the *raison d'état* of good State forms was itself respectable and good; and the opinion that all *raison d'état* was evil applied only to bad forms of the State. Admittedly even he was forced to add ruefully, that good States very seldom existed; and that consequently the *raison d'état*, which was in actual use, was almost always morally bad. Certainly therefore, one ought to praise those States in which the discrepancy between laws and *raison d'état* was not very great.

It is important that he too, like Bonaventura, was disposed towards a point of view which differentiated and treated individually the various kinds of *raison d'état*. Thus he not only distinguished the six different types of *raison d'état* which were possible according to Aristotle's tabulation; but he also taught that such a point of view ought to pay attention to individual differences in State form—for instance, between the French and Spanish monarchies, or between the Swiss Republic and that of the Netherlands. He even had some sense of the characteristic sublimity, the essential greatness of behaviour prompted by *raison d'état*, which arises when ordinary feelings are suppressed, and the mind and spirit are concentrated on a quite individual power-aim. He believed that this kind of behaviour—solely and exclusively prompted by whatever 'the individual form of government required'—was peculiar to certain unusually wise and intelligent men, such as Pericles and Lorenzo Medici.[1]

A union between Bonaventura's intuition and Zuccoli's intellectual acuteness might have been capable of leading on to a richer and more historical doctrine of *raison d'état*. But Zuccoli's follower—the Milanese doctor and philosopher, Ludovico Settala, over seventy years of age, who wrote two years after him and repeatedly plagiarized him—expanded and watered down his ideas into a sober schematism which made a great impression on contemporaries. In six long sections, he unfolds the six different kinds of *ragione di stato* in monarchy, aristocracy, 'the true republic' (also called *politia comune*), tyranny, oligarchy and mass-rule (called by him 'democracy', after the manner of Aristotle). Thus there emerged six different mechanisms, within which the typical modes of action and methods of government are ranged alongside one another in the form of a mosaic, and usually in accordance with the ancient sources. The atmosphere is almost entirely that of the schoolroom. Questions of note are: Who is at the helm? Are the laws supreme,

[1] *Insuper addamus, quod desiderium se confirmandi, sublatis etiam quibuscunque obstaculis vel a natura, vel animi affectibus vel consuetudine, ad agendum unice secundum id, quod forma individua imperii exigit, consilium sit hominis sagacitate et prudentia praeter modum valentis, qualem credendum est, Periclem jam tum Athenis fuisse et Florentiae Laurentium Mediceum*, etc., p. 46.

or is arbitrary power? He did not wish to recognize (as others generally did) that the aim of real *ragione di stato* was the public welfare; but rather that it was the welfare of those who were at the head of the State. Accordingly he distinguishes throughout between two kinds of precautionary measures belonging to *raison d'état*: those which aimed at the personal safety of the rulers, and those which aimed at maintaining the existing condition of the State.

This narrow restriction of the tasks of *raison d'état*, this painful anxiety on the score of the immediate safety of the rulers and of the State form which supported them, reveals once again the essential incompleteness of the State, the fact that its power and authority had still not reached a position of being self-evident. The goal of the general welfare, of the *comune felicità* which was emphasized by the predecessors of Zuccoli and Settala, is more of a traditional ethical phrase than a meaningful task which has been thought out in a concrete manner. The Argus eyes of *raison d'état* are, in the first instance, still turned on opposition from within: the ambition of restless minds, the minister who is becoming too powerful, the love of freedom among subjects. For example, in Spontone's doctrine of the State much space is devoted to the chapter on conspiracies, which are to be persecuted with the most pitiless severity; Settala even felt able to recommend ostracism for good republics (p. 162). No real attention was paid to anything beyond the horizon of the small Italian States and city-states; these were still striving essentially for a peaceful existence, and for the ruler to be able calmly to enjoy his power, and this was still by no means secure. Yet there emerge some very agreeable traits, as for instance when Bonaventura praises his tiny fatherland of Urbino, because (in a manner typical of the good *ragione di stato*) it attracts men of merit from everywhere, looks after trade and the arts and sciences, and, mindful of the fact that the true defences of a country are the hearts of its subjects, pulls down the castles (*fortezze*). Settala's recommendations (occasionally no less characteristic) for a policy of domestic welfare were entirely based however on the judiciousness of stopping up the sources of unrest and creating a good opinion of the rulers. Aristocracies, for example—in order to convince the people that the public revenues were being employed for the best benefit of the State—should encourage public building, found hospitals and academies, build churches, bridges and harbours. They should not however permit marriages between rich citizens and foreign princely families (pp. 126 ff.). He was thinking of Venice.

The picture of democratic *raison d'état* (which he included for the sake of systematic completeness) turned out to be considerably less vital; it had to be filled out principally with gleanings from ancient literature. But in the process one notices in him and others a basic

feeling which we have already become aware of in Boccalini: namely, a respect for the mob which is mingled with fear. One must know this feeling too, if one is to grasp in its entirety the political mentality of those times. For one occasionally gets the impression that, at bottom, a fear of unchaining the crude mass forces does have a part in their reflections on the subject of *raison d'état*. Both in a monarchy and an aristocracy, the State was seen to a certain extent in the role of keeping the masses in check. The social instinct, the conservative need for law and order, was often more strongly developed in these scholarly theoreticians and servants of rulers, than was the specifically statesmanlike point of view.

This is also revealed by the fact that generally speaking there was not much interest in a policy of power and conquest directed abroad. Only Chiaramonti argued that it was legitimate to strive for foreign territory, if the vicinity of a great and covetous potentate should put one in a position where one was forced either to conquer him or be conquered (p. 73). The faithful keeping of treaties was also advocated, in sharp opposition to Machiavelli; yet here again Chiaramonti joined with Bonaventura (p. 629) in adding the exception, that the threatened ruin of the State would release one from obligation (p. 159). But nevertheless all the Machiavellian prescriptions could be discussed on the pretext that it was permissible to portray the false and evil *raison d'état* in a deterrent manner; and in spite of his hatred for Machiavelli, Zinano revelled in depicting the underhand tricks and deceptions which could be used against the enemy. Even Judith's act, as he subtly tried to prove, implied no falsehood (pp. 39 ff.), and he applauded the craftiness of Jacob against Laban (p. 99). For behind the widely displayed shield of Christian morality, many different stratagems were concealed in a casuistical manner. The majority of these hot-blooded Italians still possessed a strong drop of Machiavellian blood.[1] For example, Settala was quite ready to allow a virtuous ruler to practise dissimulation. In this way they cast longing eyes at the forbidden fruit.

Occasionally one notices in these Italians of the Baroque period—influenced perhaps by Spanish ideals?—a light trace of chivalrous feelings, producing the same reaction against Machiavellism which we observed earlier on in the case of Gentillet. Machiavelli had extolled and justified victory in war by any means, even deceitful ones. But Frachetta now explained that the principle of *vincere con fraude* was not in accordance with the true wisdom of war, because it was opposed to genuine valour and detracted from the glory of the victor. Of course he also held that stratagems were permissible in war, but without troubling to draw a dividing line between *ruse de guerre* and deceit.[2]

[1] Further evidence for this in Ferrari, *Corso*, etc., pp. 389 ff.

[2] *Il seminario de'governi di stato e di guerra*, p. 89 f.

The greatest bitterness was always aroused against Machiavelli by his lack of religious feeling. The very fact that this irreligiousness was coupled with a sense that religion was at the same time valuable, but from a purely utilitarian point of view, was felt to constitute his most serious attack on religion. For this would mean that religion was dragged down from its throne, and, from being a supreme value and an end-in-itself of a supra-terrestrial kind, it would be changed into a mere means towards earthly ends. It then lost its value as absolute truth, its very essence; for under certain circumstances, a hypocritical religion could (as the doctrines of Machiavelli insisted) provide exactly the same practical advantages as the real religion. They were fully aware of the revolution of all values, the entire secularization of life which was threatened by Machiavellism. The doctrine of Machiavelli, remarked Chiaramonti (p. 467), is equivalent to an adoration of the ruler; it makes him the measure of all acts, the source of all justice and moral goodness, it endows him with divine attributes. The new-found value of *raison d'état* was thus not permitted to destroy the old hierarchy of values. *Ragione di stato*, as Canonhiero said (p. 589), was indeed set above all other rights; but it was subordinated to religious authority, just as the body is to the soul, and the flesh to the spirit. To act contrary to religious authority is the same as acting against God Himself.

In opposition to political reality as it existed, and to the fact that Machiavellism was practised widely and with success, they had recourse to the old Christian consolation that God frequently permitted wickedness as a punishment for sin, and that the wickedness itself would be punished in the life to come (Palazzo, p. 22; Chiaramonti, p. 378). But from the point of view of a good and deliberate *raison d'état*, an attempt was also made to indicate the doubtful advantages of a ruthless egoism and self-interest—the fact that such a policy tended to cut both ways. Chiaramonti observed (p. 373) that, when Francis I allied himself with the Turks against Charles V, it did not turn out well. For, apart from the fact that it was immoral, it also failed in the end to be useful; because the religious cleavage that shattered his kingdom arose in no small degree from the consideration that the king, out of interests of State, sought the friendship of the most dreadful enemy of Christendom. The consequences had been all the worse for this particular nation from the very fact that hitherto it had been such a very zealous enemy of unbelievers. We may recall that Botero had already expressed this view. It had clearly become a conventional argument in Catholic politics.

It scarcely even needs to be said that, for this group of thinkers too, a unity of religion in the State and a refusal to tolerate new creeds was a self-evident requirement of the good *raison d'état*. Clerical and religious motives, and the motive of what was useful to the State, were

still very closely blended together in this. Canonhiero was quite rightly apprehensive of the imminent disintegrating effects of religious individualism, if each man were able to fashion his God in his own manner. All morality and modes of life would thereby be cast into the vortex of change; the authority of the laws, and eventually even that of the ruler, would be brought into contempt (p. 607). He recalled the revolutionary movements of the German Peasant Wars and the Baptists in the sixteenth century which might have given a foretaste of what history held in store. The hatred of heretics which one detects in his own writings and in those of Zinano and the aged Settala, has a harsh and ruthless note. Only Chiaramonti—who is, significantly, the most recent of these writers—moderated this hatred a little. Since, as a result of a false understanding of political interests on the part of the rulers, heresy had now spread so widely that it could not be extirpated without great harm to the Catholics or without the danger of civil war, it had to be tolerated as a lesser evil; but at the same time, one had to support the Catholic religion as much as possible, as Henry IV had done (p. 43).

These are perhaps the most characteristic ideas of average contemporary thought, which one can pick out from this mixture of pedantry and political wisdom. Behind their spasmodic eagerness to bring the modern statecraft once more into harmony with the religious and ethical tradition of the West, there lay a concealed scepticism which they only succeeded in mastering with difficulty. It was not possible, said Chiaramonti at the end of his book (p. 486), to prevent people from practising the bad *raison d'état*; but it was possible to prevent anyone from believing that it was 'a consequence of the nature of government'.

* * *

It strikes one as very curious, that the Italian literature of *ragione di stato*, which seemed so inexhaustibly fertile in the first decades of the seventeenth century, should have completely dwindled away in the second half of the century and only left behind a few insignificant stragglers. People were evidently sated with it; they knew all there was to know, and had nothing more to say about it. They had formed for themselves a fixed circle of ideas; and it would only have been possible to break out of this circle towards new problems, if new and meaningful experiences had forced thought to make further progress. But there were no such experiences. Perhaps the real cause for this slackening of the political spirit is to be sought rather in the fact that the great tensions of the Thirty Years War (in which even Italians had shared spiritually and intellectually) had come to an end, that Spain had sunk back from the summit of her power (this had always been a source of anxiety to

Italians) and had now become, together with Italy, a mere objective element in world events, and that even the internal State life of Italy had fallen into decay since the Convention. But the seed of *ragione di stato* had meanwhile fallen on other countries which were in need of it and received it with a fresh responsiveness.

If we try to pick out, from the complex of ideas comprising *ragione di stato*, the one which was most useful from a practical point of view and most efficacious historically, then it must certainly be this: that it was perfectly permissible for the demands and necessities of the 'public good' to violate statute law and the laws which the State had made—though such demands must not indeed offend against divine and natural law. To a certain extent this was the compromise between the mediaeval spirit and the spirit of the modern State—the compromise which rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's, and to God that which was God's. It became henceforth a principal idea in the life of the State, and most of all in the domestic life of the State. If, in the power struggles between States, it now continued to be possible (just as hitherto) for the bounds of divine and natural law to be overstepped by the breaking of treaties and by the use of underhand means, and even if this was frequently done against unruly and troublesome subjects within the country—yet this was still only an unorthodox practice which exceptionally few people dared to justify theoretically in accordance with Machiavelli's ideas. But *raison d'état*, conceived as a means for breaking through the old statute law, became a favourite standby, a real principle; it henceforth became a weapon which the modern State could brandish with full conviction and with a good conscience, and without which it could never have asserted itself over the Estates and the privileged classes. The significance of this was immense. Against the old ideas of legitimacy connected with the corporate State of the Ancien Régime, it was now possible for Absolutism to play the trump card of a new idea of justice—a concept of justice which was still growing was now set up in opposition to those concepts which were fully developed and expanded, because it was now possible any day for the 'public good' to demand and enforce an alteration of law. *Raison d'état* was a means for making a hard and unyielding material softer and more malleable. With what a ponderous slowness and resistance the institutions of State and society had developed during the Middle Ages. Now there came the constraining force which set them in motion more swiftly—not so swiftly, however, as after the eighteenth century and the French Revolution, when other impelling and revolutionary ideas were contributing too, but swiftly enough to widen the breach between the inner character of mediaeval and modern history. Thus the idea of *raison d'état* is one of the most completely important characteristics and ferments of what is called recent history.

Religion, morality and justice were the three powers which were seriously threatened by Machiavellism. In actual practice, from this time onwards right up to the present day, it was able to continue weakening and undermining all three powers, while at the same time theoretically upholding them by means of the train of ideas which is reflected in the literature of *ragione di stato*; at least religion and morality were allowed to retain their sovereignty in the face of *raison d'état*, and only in the case of justice did it come to an open breach. But it was precisely this fact, that now even justice (a sphere by nature so conservative) was being dragged into the flux of things, not only as far as practical application was concerned, but even with regard to its principles as they were established in the normative ideas, and value-judgments of men—it was this which had such an immense historical effect.

Less in Italy than in Germany and France. In the case of France we may recall what was said on the subject of Bodin, and we shall not require to deal specially with the characteristic development there. In Italy the theorists' doctrine, that *raison d'état* stood above statute law, had not really said anything new, but had only confirmed an existing situation. For here Roman Law, which was saturated with the spirit of the ancient *raison d'état*, and which absolved the rulers from being bound by the laws, had continued to remain alive; and the early decline of the feudal system, the early appearance of violently energetic city-tyrants and rulers, had not permitted here the formation of that tough crust of law founded on custom and privilege, which in Germany obstructed the rise of the modern State. Whatever rights and customs there were seemed to someone like Machiavelli so much the reverse of dangerous, that his *raison d'état* was capable of recommending that they should be respected as much as possible. In Germany, however, the new doctrine of *raison d'état* provided the ruler with a hammer with which to break up that crust. It was more effective for this purpose than the introduction of Roman Law, which in the sixteenth century had already been completed; the significance of Roman Law in the establishing of Absolutism has often been exaggerated.[1] For it was in the seventeenth century that Absolutism first arose, and it was precisely throughout the whole of the seventeenth century too that the literature of *raison d'état* flourished in Germany. We do not wish to overstress the power of theory. The rise of Absolutism in the German territorial State was based in the first instance on the frightful effects and experiences of the Thirty Years War, and on the need for concentrated and organized power in the State. The Corporate State of the Ancien Régime and with it the idea of a good old inviolable type of justice, contained in provincial customs and provincial laws, had become bankrupt during the Thirty Years War, because it had left the State defenceless. In order

[1] Cf. v. Below, *Die Ursachen der Rezeption des röm. Rechts*, 1905, p. 55 f.

to create the new defence of the *miles perpetuus*, and to overcome any resistance to it on the part of the Estates and established privilege, the will-to-power of the ruler was now able to invoke the assistance of just this new idea of justice, of the *salus publica*, and thereby justify and ennoble itself spiritually. One only has to read the political testament of the Great Elector, one only has to follow closely the onslaught by his commissariat officials on the recalcitrant rights and privileges of the provinces, in order to detect everywhere the stirring of this new idea. A Helmstedt dissertation of 1651, inspired by Hermann Conring, on the subject of *Ratio status* (and which went under the name of Heinrich Voss of Ravensburg) was dedicated to the Elector.[1] One of his most cultured statesmen, the intelligent Gottfried von Jena, who represented him from 1663 onwards at the Imperial Diet of Regensburg, had previously composed, as professor at Frankfurt, twenty-four dissertations on *Ratio status*; such keen interest was aroused by these that they were afterwards collected and appeared in 1667 under the title of *Fragmenta de ratione status diu desiderata.*

And for several decades now this whole literature had been taking effect, and levelling the ground for the coming of absolute rule. The assassination of Wallenstein, which was carried out at the instigation of a bigoted ruler, would have been unthinkable, if the idea had not been predominant that statute law must yield before the higher necessity of State, and this connection has recently been pointed out by Srbik.[2] The doctrine of the ruler's privilege of assassination was indeed already current in the sixteenth century; but, characteristically, in Germany itself it had hitherto only met with the very minimum of approval and application,[3] and had been considered a foreign dishonesty. There had first to grow up a stronger receptivity for foreign ideas and a more comprehensive meditation on the problem of *raison d'état*, in order to create that conviction of right to which the Emperor Ferdinand II yielded when he caused the order for assassination to be issued. It is very instructive to follow closely the procedure which was adopted in this; for the method of treatment was exactly in accordance with the doctrines which had been disseminated in the Catholic world by Botero, Ammirato and their school. On the one hand, in the face of high treason on the part of the commander of the imperial army, there was a sense that they were empowered by the emergency to dispense with the due process of law; but they did not feel themselves authorized

[1] Dissertations published under the names of the pupils at this time were generally the work of the teachers, as is shown for example by Chr. Besold, *Politicorum libri duo*, 1618, p. 876. Yet Conring especially to a great extent encouraged his pupils to work with him, so that he was able to say: *Meum et non meum.* v. Möller, *H. Conring*, p. 105.

[2] v. Srbik, *Wallensteins Ende*, p. 87 f.

[3] Platzhoff, *Mordbefugnis*, p. 44.

(as the expert opinion of Gundaker von Liechtenstein shows) to leave 'equitableness', that is to say, divine and natural law, out of account altogether.[1] For this reason there took place a secret investigation, which, though it did indeed dispense with hearing the defendant, was nevertheless undertaken by counsel who (in Liechtenstein's phrase) were 'conscientious and thoroughly well versed in law'. And (as had been required by Botero) the father confessor Lamormaini was also asked for his opinion. Now, having first set his conscience at rest, the Emperor gave the order on 24th January 1634 for Wallenstein and his accomplices to be killed, if there was no other way, as 'convicted guilty persons'.

The assassination of Wallenstein was for the Germanic world what the massacre of St. Bartholomew had been for the Latin world—the most glaring and blazing of the flashes of lightning which had burst out of the clouds of *raison d'état*. How closely connected the Germanic and Latin worlds were, and how strong (particularly at this time) the influence of Italy on Germany still was, is shown by the German literature of *raison d'état*, which developed as an off-shoot from the Italian literature founded by Botero and Ammirato. If we exclude the remarks of the imperial counsel Bornitz in 1604 on the difference between true and false *raison d'état*, then the first to lead off was Professor Arnold Clapmarius of Altdorf (who died at an early age) with his work *De arcanis rerum publicarum libri VI*, 1605.[2] He was followed by the prolific and superficial teacher of law from Tübingen, Christoph Besold, [3] Christoph von Forstner (the former visitor to Campanella

[1] Srbik, p. 98 (to whom we owe the explanation of these developments), believes that while the theory of *raison d'état*, which we are here considering, certainly ensures that the State has a 'power of life and death, it does not however release the monarch from obligations to ideal *and positive* law'. This very exemption (in case of necessity) from the demands of positive law was a chief point in the theory. The chief passages from Liechtenstein's *Gutachten* run: 'For no reason in the world may one act against God, but *justitia* allows it . . . *extremis malis extrema media adhibenda*, and *pro conservatione status* one should do everything that is not against God'. Srbik, p. 75 f.—One would expect to find that the book by the Imperial Counsellor v. Efferen, *Manuale politicum de ratione status seu idolo principum*, 1630, was a source for these opinions. But this strictly Catholic and ethical doctrine also held that the 'true' *raison d'état* should abide by the positive law.

[2] Cf. on this subject Hegels' Bonn dissertation of 1918. G. Lenz, *Zur Lehre von der Staatsräson* (*Archiv d. öff. Rechts N.F.*, 9, 261 ff.), based on a false interpretation of Clapmar and Besold, tries to show that the German doctrine of *raison d'état* and *arcana dominationis* was little influenced by the Italian doctrine and arose as a weapon of the States within the Empire against the Emperor, and that the imperial interest demanded that this aristocratic doctrine should be opposed. But Clapmar's doctrine refers quite generally to all States and rulers, and it has already been shown that the Emperor also made use of the new doctrine.

[3] Statecraft and administration are treated in Book 2 of Chr. Besold's *Politicorum libri duo*, 1618. See ch. 5 of this, *de arcanis rerum publicarum*, in reference to Clapmar. Besold's *Discursus de arcanis rerum publ.* (bound up with the 1644 Elzevier edition of Clapmar) is identical with this chapter.

and later chancellor at Montbéliard), and the imperial counsel von Efferen in 1630, with works which treated the subject. From 1630 onwards the interest grew. The well-known scholarly names of Reinking, Böcler and Conring occur in this literature; and most of all perhaps there belongs to it the powerful anti-Hapsburg pamphlet of Bogislav Chemnitz, who published soon after 1640, under the pseudonym of *Hippolithus a Lapide*,[1] his *Dissertatio de ratione status in imperio Romano-Germanico* with a general section on the nature of *raison d'état*. During the last years of the Thirty Years War *Ratio status* became (just as it had, a few decades previously, in Italy) a subject for conversation in the market-place and the street; it become an *aenigma saeculi*, about which people poured out their hearts with anger and dread, as if it had been a new epidemic, but also with a secret respect. In 1646 Rist brought *Ratio status* onto the stage in the character of a surgeon, and in the writings of Christoph von Grimmelshausen one can sense the commotion about it. After about 1650 the stream of this literature became even more copious, and remained so up to the end of the century. It was the public opinion of learned German society (thereby inaugurating the triumphal progress of absolute rule)—for it originated predominantly with jurists, and after them with theologians and teachers. The fervour slackened off when absolutism had on the whole attained its aim, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the subject went out of fashion altogether towards the middle of the eighteenth century. It had now ceased to be modern—not because the thing itself had vanished from reality, but because it had become self-evident, and because the learned public, which took an interest in the State, had meanwhile diverted its attention to the new ideas arising out of the movement of the Enlightenment.

In the German literature we do not find any essentially new and important intellectual matter, comparable to that which we noticed in the Italian literature. It had from the very beginning been felt as an alien plant of Latin origin, as a doctrine whose force it was indeed impossible to avoid, which one certainly tried to adapt to the German requirements, but which one could also regard at the same time with mistrust and anxiety. The traditions of the patriarchal territorial State (the Protestant just as much as the Catholic) were focused on stability and a quiet life, the maintenance of old rights, an administrative solicitude for the Church on the part of the government and a fostering of justice as the chief purpose of the State, and these traditions were expressed in the literature which held up a mirror to the ruler (most of all perhaps in the well-known works of Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff);

[1] On the subject of the actual year (not yet precisely established), see H. Breslau in the Introduction to vol. 3 of *Klassiker der Politik*, 1922 (*Severinus von Monzambano*), p. 19.

they were acquainted only with the traditional rights and duties of Christian rulers, but not with any new rights which might be created, nor with any new power which might be attained by them. The concept of *Ratio status*, however (for which no equivalent German expression could be found), contained something which impelled onwards and seemed to create new patterns, something which one obscurely felt and respected. This concept was now assimilated in true German fashion, by making it into a legal concept. The same thing was done by Clapmarius, when he conceived of *ragione di stato* as the *jus dominationis*, which gave the sovereign the right to set himself above the *jus commune seu ordinarium* in the interests of the *bonum publicum*. This right—as he noted in correspondence with Ammirato, with an attitude, however, which was quite traditionally German—might also be called 'privilege'. He considered that this right (any infringement of which was tantamount to crime) had certain hard and fast limits consisting of religion on the one hand, and of *fides sive pudor* on the other; and he condemned the immoral Machiavellism, the *flagita dominationis*, which he equated with the *cattiva ragione di stato* of the Italians. But he felt very strongly that it was occasionally possible for the statesman to act rightly on those very occasions when he was acting in opposition to the laws.[1] And he also admitted that deception was an indispensable method in statecraft. From *jus dominationis* he now derived the *arcana rerum publicarum* in general, i.e. the methods and ways by which it might be achieved; he also separated the latter into *arcana imperii* (i.e. the methods aimed at maintaining the form of the State and variously adapted to this end [2]), and the *arcana dominationis* which aimed at maintaining in power those who were ruling at the time and which also differed according to the form of the State.[3] He found it necessary to add, however, that the boundaries between the two were not firmly fixed (Book 3, ch. 1).

We shall not delve further into this division of the concept and its further ramifications, for what interests us here, just as everywhere else, is the vital historical element, and not mere logic-chopping. But there was also something very vital in his theory (which he derived from Tacitus) about the *simulacra imperii seu libertatis*. In return for the real rights and freedoms which one took away from them, the subjects had to be compensated by being presented with illusions of justice and

[1] *Nonnunquam in Republica quaedam contra leges fieri et recte fieri. Conclusiones de jure publico*, Thesis 164. Elzevier edition of the *Arcana* of 1644, p. 49. The *Conclusiones* was a preliminary work of Clapmar's for the *Arcana*.

[2] It may also be possible to trace the corresponding doctrine of Bonaventura, Zuccoli and Settala (see above, pp. 121 ff.) back to Clapmar. Cf. also H. Bresslau, *loc. cit.*, p. 17.

[3] In the *Conclusiones de jure publico*, Clapmar identifies the *arcana dominationis* with *ragion di stato*, and defines it as *recta et secreta privilegia conservandae dominationis introducta boni publici causa*. Elzevier edition of 1644, p. 17.

freedom which one allowed to exist as *jura inania,* though from a political point of view they were enormously useful and quite indispensable.[1] Examples of this were the position of the Doge, who seemed to be the ruler of the Venetian aristocratic republic, and the position of the Senate in the period of the Roman Empire. The greatest example (which was then being revealed by the seventeenth century in Germany) was the manner in which the growing rule of Absolutism was able to undermine the constitutional arrangements of the three estates, and yet at the same time outwardly conserve them.

Clapmar's book was widely read, and frequently republished and imitated. The reflections on the *arcana* and *simulacra imperii* helped to sharpen the sense for political technique, for rational and purposive action, and for clever, inconspicuous, but effective tricks. It may also be assumed that this literature was read eagerly and taken to heart by the practical statesmen, and thus contributed essentially towards creating that atmosphere of cool and purposive sobriety which is characteristic of the seventeenth century. Thus, for example, one of the followers of Clapmar, the Dutch jurist Johannes Corvinus, in his *Discursus de arcanis rerum publicarum* (with which he introduced the Elzevir edition of Clapmar's work in 1644 [2]) recommended the rulers of an aristocratic republic to use methods such that 'the *plebs* would be lured into believing that they had something which they did not have'. As for instance, that in the electing of officials the patricians should be obliged on pain of punishment to exercise their elective right, but that ordinary citizens should be under no such obligation. The latter would then certainly prefer to attend to their own livelihood, and leave the management of the State to the patricians. As an *Arcanum* of monarchy in its attitude towards the people, he recommended that laws which procured new power for the ruler should be arranged so that they appeared to rest on the assent of the people. As an *Arcanum* of monarchy towards the aristocracy he suggested that important offices should not be conferred for a very long period or that, if this happened, they should only be conferred on those who were entirely devoted to the ruler and not exceptionally gifted either; or that they should rather be given to lawyers of low birth than to military men. It should moreover be an *Arcanum* of monarchy never to allow anyone of royal blood to be killed, for by doing this the ruler would 'uncover his flank' and endanger his own life. It seemed to him a *simulacrum* of monarchy, that the ruler should deliberately allow imprudent slanderous speeches to be made

[1] Machiavelli had already recommended (*Discorsi,* I, 25) that, in constitutional reforms, the outline of the old arrangements should be retained; this was indeed only for reformers of an old State, not for those founding an absolute monarchy, for in his opinion the latter ought to create everything fresh.

[2] Cf. Hegels, *loc. cit.,* p. 27 f.

against him with impunity amongst the people, while at the same time noting the real defamers in order to protect himself against them. 'Indeed it is the prime art of government for a ruler, to be able to tolerate envy.' And the best *ratio* would be a moderate regime, which took care that the subjects were not discontented with the political situation. In order to achieve the more important things, one had to let smaller things pass without appearing to notice them. In general, one ought not always to express everything that one noticed, and one should behave as if one had failed to see certain things which one had actually seen 'for indeed human life is nothing else but one long deception and dissimulation'. So, in the last resort, even this rationally mild and cautious statecraft arose out of a profound contempt for humanity.

This literature was of assistance, above all, to absolutism; but in no sense is it true that it set out exclusively to serve absolutism as a matter of course. The idea (which was first developed by Clapmar, and later was more fully utilized by Settala) that every form of the State had its own *raison d'état* made it possible to use the idea of *raison d'état* even for quite anti-absolutist purposes. This was done in the most formidable manner by Bogislav Chemnitz in his *Hippolithus a Lapide*. All the logical methods of a generalizing theory (which the thought of this period was fond of developing with one-sided zeal) were here placed at the disposal of a quite specific political aim—that of reinforcing Sweden in her struggle against the Emperor, and of extirpating the House of Hapsburg from the Empire wherever possible. If one could succeed (as he believed was possible) in giving a convincing proof that the Empire was in fact not a monarchy, but an aristocracy, then one would also be able to calculate the *ratio status* (i.e. the guiding principle and pattern of its political life and action) with the finest accuracy; and thus, out of the six basic principles of the German *ratio status* which he formulated, the most important seemed to him the one which applied to the Empire Clapmar's doctrine of the *simulacra imperii*: *Quod simulacra majestatis Principi relinquenda, jura vero Reipublicae conservandae sint*. But the element in his attitude which is peculiar and important for the history of the period was the fact that his opposition to monarchical ideas in the Empire by no means resulted from a spirit of undisciplined Liberalism and disintegration of the State, but was capable throughout of forming part of the severe and concentrated thought-process of *raison d'état*. Few have been so insistent as he in placing right in the forefront the idea that national conduct is conduct in accordance with an iron necessity—limited indeed, as he himself pointed out, by the bounds of divine law on the one hand, and of loyalty, fairness and decency on the other, but absolutely unrestricted in every other way and consequently also with reference to the valid statute law. Therein he saw the *necessitas reipublicae*; he cited (as Clap-

mar had already done) Seneca's remark that *necessitas magnum imbecillitatis humanae patrocinium omnem legem frangit*, and added Clapmar's own remark: *Et tunc necessitas ea vis est, ea dignitas, ut saepe rei non licitae jus et aequum tribuat.*[1] Indeed, even if it was not any *necessitas*, but only the evident benefit of the State, that made it advisable to set the statute law on one side, the basic principle had to remain valid, that *salus publica suprema lex*. He thus went further than most of the other representatives of the doctrine of *raison d'état* in Germany, who generally maintained that it was only permissible to break the common law in cases of pressing need. With an unqualified consistency Chemnitz also advocated the precedence of State interests over private interests. *Publica utilitas praeferenda est privatorum contractibus.* Absolutist rule owed a debt of gratitude to the champion of aristocracy in the Empire, for the effective assistance which he provided.

The apparent contradiction resolves itself if we take note of the fact that the aristocratic powers in the Empire, which he supported, were really all growing monarchies; they plundered the monarchical rights of the imperial power, only in order to take them for themselves.[2] Between the Emperor and the princes there took place as it were a race for the prize of *raison d'état*; and the Peace of Westphalia, which emphatically confirmed the sovereign power of the territorial authorities and even increased it (by not clearly defining its extent), decided this contest in favour of the princes.

It is a remarkable fact that now, amongst all the theoreticians of *raison d'état*, there was only to be found one who supported the dying regime of the estates and who exhorted the princes to listen to the advice of the provincial diets and thus ensure their dominion by means of the love of their people. This was Johann Theodor Sprenger in the *Bonus princeps* (2nd ed., 1655).

The remainder repeated the sequences of ideas which we are already familiar with, in one arrangement or another, and with all the German characteristics of pedantry, of conscientious definitions and distinctions, and of solid middle-class morality. But amongst these cautious attempts to reconcile *raison d'état*, law, morality and religion, there sprang up isolated instances too of that specifically German radicalism which, precisely because it has its roots in ethical questions, is fond of carrying principles to extremes and of ruthlessly describing their most terrible consequences.

This was done by a political writer, now completely forgotten, Johann

[1] P. 18 of the edition of 1647; cf. Clapmar, p. 160.

[2] Chemnitz wanted to give full sovereignty in the Empire, not to the rulers, but to the Imperial Diet, but at the same time he pared away this sovereignty by the rights which he exacted for the rulers. Cf. Weber, *Hippol. a Lapide, Histor. Zeitschrift*, 29, 300 ff.

Elias Kessler, aulic councillor in the principality of Öttingen, in his unwieldy and eccentric, but very remarkable book *Detectus ac a fuco politico repurgatus candor et imperium indefinitum, vastum et immensum Rationis Status boni principis*, that is: The pure and genuine rule of State for Christian princes and regents, etc. (Nuremberg 1678).[1] This certainly was itself a quite German phenomenon, that this servant of one of the smallest rulers should make himself into a kind of German Hobbes, and with flashing eye reveal the world-principle of 'undetermined' *raison d'état* even in the smallest national community. Indeed, the weaker a regime was, in his opinion, the more it was necessary to increase in it the *gradus rationis status* (p. 46). It is peculiar, and at the same time instructive from a general historical point of view, to see how the intellectual sphere of the orthodox Lutheran movement, to which he belonged, had to become united with the quite worldly nature of the new statecraft and of a ruthless necessity of State. This occurred, as it often did in the harsh transitional period of that time when the goals of life were changing from being other-worldly and were becoming mundane, by means of many different crude and brittle connecting links of argument; but most of all, perhaps, through the fact that God Himself was raised to the position of 'Director' of *raison d'état*, and *raison d'état* was explained as something quite authorized and pleasing to God, which had its origins in human nature itself (p. 38). Almost anything could be derived from the belief in the absolute inscrutability and omnipotence of the divine will, which had been strongly urged by Luther. Kessler had a sure feeling, not lacking in profundity, that a statesman in power must indeed feel himself to be as free as if everything was entirely at his discretion and depended on his arbitrary judgment; but that he was still nothing but God's tool for his own personal happiness or unhappiness. The valuations of a 'master of the State' might often seem in the opinion of men to be audacious and unintelligible; for when seen more clearly 'as thus being impelled and guided by a higher authority, they seldom issued in prudence' (p. 486); and one simply had to surrender gladly and willingly to this divine skill and operation, just as iron obeyed a magnet. He even ventured on to fantastic reflections about the 'State angels', whom God might have established among His angel host to watch over each separate regime. But these might also be opposed by just as many evil spirits and influences (pp. 506 ff).

He looked on Machiavelli too as one of these evil spirits, and considered that the pure and unadulterated *Ratio status* was completely obscured by the power of insatiable appetites and by Machiavellian statecraft and hypocritical intrigues (p. 291). Most of all it was again the

[1] My attention was drawn to him by Kunkel's work, but I differ slightly in my interpretation of him.

Machiavellian treatment of religion that aroused his indignation; for he believed that a ruler should not only appear to take it seriously, but should actually do so. But his belief in the divine approval of *raison d'état* permitted him to assert, side by side with the proposition that the *ratio status* should be subordinated to divine doctrine and religion, another contradictory one: namely that 'to a certain extent spiritual and divine things are not altogether released from the command of this universally-ruling World-Goddess or *Ratio status*', but that on the contrary, for the sake of the general well-being, their scope must on some occasions be restricted (p. 223). So for instance the preacher must not allow himself to be diverted from his duty of reproving the sins of the government; but if it is a case of excesses on the part of the State, he must carry out his duty in a manner which spares the governmental authority, *separato prorsus modo* (p. 213).

This lets one see that he could all the more easily have dared to relax the limits of natural law, which had otherwise been so rigidly maintained by theory. Only a few steps further and, if he had been a great thinker, he could have overthrown the whole accepted theory of natural right. For he recognized quite correctly that what one called natural right was in no sense absolutely fixed, but on the contrary 'from time to time appeared alterable' (p. 230), i.e. became on the whole modified and restricted by the demands and expediencies of social life. For example, serfdom undoubtedly conflicted with natural law, in so far as the latter demanded personal freedom for men; and yet it had been established on grounds of *raison d'état* for the sake of the general well-being of nations, because it presented a lesser evil as against the custom prevailing hitherto, whereby a conquered enemy was put to death (p. 228).[1] And in his view the nature of *ratio status* consisted just in this very art of always being able to choose the lesser of two evils. With inexorable firmness he preached the constraining influence of policy, the peremptory iron necessity for the 'wise master of the State' to act in this way and no other. Better that a man should die, than that a whole nation should be ruined. It was for this reason that in cases of emergency, as for instance in the event of dangerous rebellions, the ruler 'occasionally found himself entitled, for the sake of the general well-being, not to spare even the innocent' (p. 253). 'In this fashion a ruler of State is not so much entitled by right, as rather *ipso facto* obliged, for the good of his own State, to undertake or permit something irregular, *simulatione vel dissimulatione*, even against the dictates of his own conscience and yet without injury to the same, or (to put it more clearly) trim his sails according to the wind; and thus good and evil are, on certain

[1] In this he anticipated Treitschke's judgment: 'The introduction of slavery was a salutary act of civilization.' *Der Sozialismus und seine Gönner* (*Zehn Jahre deutscher Kämpfe. Auswahl*, p. 100).

occasions, freely and unrestrictedly placed in the power and at the disposal of a ruler of State, according to the demands of circumstances'. Even if he were an angel, he would occasionally have to renounce the Good, for the sake of the general well-being (p. 256). As it was with morality, so also the rights, lives and property of men could be swallowed up by the Leviathan of this *raison d'état*. Even Hobbes himself was to a certain extent outdone by this doctrine of Kessler's that the *dominium supereminens* of the State entailed extraordinary powers 'to dispose of the lives and property of its subjects, either in case of necessity, or else for the sake of the general welfare' (p. 280).[1] He did indeed issue a warning against wars of conquest, and characteristically believed that the State of medium size was more suited for putting into effect his rigid conception of the State than a large State would be, the latter being in many ways too complex and composite, and polluted moreover with greater sins. But still he did not shrink from laying it down as permissible that inordinately large neighbouring States, which were becoming dangerous, might 'certainly be plundered' for the sake of one's own security; indeed, in cases of extreme need, one might even be permitted to instigate conspiracies in such a State, although this would be contrary to divine ordinance and to all the law of nations (pp. 266 ff.).

But all this threatened to obliterate the dividing line between the 'pure' *raison d'état* and Machiavellism, which he too was striving to draw clearly. Thus for him the points of difference between them were reduced to two: firstly, that only some, and not all, of the disreputable methods of Machiavelli were held by him to be permissible, and secondly, that he would only allow these to be used for purposes 'generally beneficial to the State' and not for the private advantage of the ruler. All this tended to verify the empirical fact, that it was precisely those who had most energetically studied the theory of *raison d'état* that were constantly finding themselves back in dangerous proximity to the abyss uncovered by Machiavelli.

We saw this in the case of Campanella. Whilst he languished in the prison at Naples, his words came to the ears of the German, Kaspar Schoppe; Scioppius learnt from him how one could combat the abomination of heresy, but along with the proper business of protecting religion he also picked up, apparently, the arts of Machiavelli, arts which were already condemned as sinful and were yet to suffer even greater condemnation. In his little book *Paedia politices* 1622,[2] he

[1] Regarding Hobbes' somewhat smaller claims over the lives of the subjects, cf. Bk. II, ch. 1.

[2] In Kowallek's monograph on Scioppius (*Forsch. z. deutschen Geschichte*, 11, 460) this is undervalued. Janet, *Hist. de la science politique*, 4th ed., 1, 553 ff., is more just, and hence Dilthey, *Schriften*, 2, 269.

executed a manœuvre which had already been much in vogue amongst the Italians, namely that of portraying the character of Machiavellism as it really was, not in order to praise it or openly recommend it, but in order to show how a tyrant must behave if he is to achieve his aims. For in doing so he could cite the precedent, not only of the portrayal of the tyrant's behaviour (from which Italians had already borrowed plentifully) in Book 5 of the *Politics* of Aristotle, but also of the commentary on it by Thomas Aquinas, where the same method had been adopted. So long as one read this in the proper way (Scioppius added), there could be no danger that it would mislead one into similar conduct, since it was indeed only a *modus loquendi hypotheticus*. And he then proceeded further to develop this philosophy of As-If, treading his way warily. Every branch of science should in fact, he considered, be confined strictly within its own boundaries; the political theorist had something different to say from the theologian. He ought not indeed to praise tyranny, but it would be foolish and naïve to blame the political theorist for advising the power-hungry tyrant to accept, not true piety and virtue, but rather the appearance of these; for it was not the actual virtue of a ruler which procured the love of his subjects, but rather the opinion he held about virtue, and it was not his yoke itself which aroused their hatred, but again rather the attitude one had towards it. The political theorist could not even be blamed (and here we see Scioppius coming closer and closer to Machiavelli) if he discussed, not the best possible State and the one which ought to exist, but rather the actual State as it commonly presented itself. His teaching would be false if he maintained that this latter kind of State was governed strictly in accordance with justice and religion, for daily experience revealed that the reverse was true. Only it was not permissible to praise this actual State, imbued as it was with power, cunning and bad faith.

Many a politically-minded father-confessor at the time of the Thirty Years War may well have read these doctrines with a pious grin. But in 1663 Hermann Conring republished Scioppius' pamphlet, and wrote annotations to Machiavelli's *Principe*,[1] which he dedicated in 1660 to the French statesman Hugh de Lionne, and which in principle now attempted the same enterprise as Scioppius: namely, tried to investigate politics as it really was, not in order to advise those States which strove for the true happiness of their citizens, but rather because these counsels might be useful for the States, *quales hic mundus habet plurimas*. He alternated between a realistic and a moralist point of view, now declaring solemnly (with appeal to God, the Bible and natural law) that it was perfectly possible to govern States without having recourse to crime,

[1] *Nic. Machiavelli Princeps cum animadversionibus politicis Hermanni Conringii.* I used the edition of 1686.

and now again being forced to concede that in cases of emergency it might occasionally not be improper even for just rulers to break faith. And the many telling criticisms which he made about Machiavelli's advice were deliberately from a utilitarian, and not from a moral point of view.

One should observe, then, the profound difference between this method used by Scioppius and Conring, and the average treatment of the problem of *raison d'état*, as it showed itself finally in Clapmar, Chemnitz and Kessler. The latter was nomothetical, and the former empirical and realistic, but in such a way that the empirical method did not pass as the only justifiable one, but merely as one which, besides the nomothetical method, could be considered possible and justifiable. The doctrine of the actual State as it exists thus took its place beside the doctrine of the State as it ought to be—a method which even Conring himself still continued to use effectively. This dualism of methods and standards of value tended to differentiate them still further from Machiavelli who had abandoned the question of the ideal State itself, and had investigated only the actual State. The school of *ragione di stato* and its German followers certainly vouchsafed one a frequent insight into the actual, i.e. the evil State; but basically they still persisted in their endeavour to provide a norm and to demonstrate the rules of a *raison d'état* which would harmonize with divine and natural law. What emerges here is the great opposition (even today not entirely spent) between the absolute and relativist modes of thought. In the last resort the absolutist tendency still wished—no matter how saturated in experiential material it might be, or how many concessions it might make to reality—to find general and universally binding propositions in accordance with the old tradition of natural law that there did finally exist a harmony between the commands of nature and the commands of reason. The relativist mode of thought, which judged it permissible to investigate the vital processes and expediencies of the real, the evil State itself and to demonstrate their relative justification, broke down by doing so the harmony between the command of nature and the command of reason—or, rather, would have broken it down if it had at that time been more persistent and forthright. Machiavelli had shown the daemonic spirit necessary for this, but the age of the Counter-Reformation had once more discouraged these first attempts to achieve a modern relativism. Now they were re-establishing themselves slowly, but inconsistently.

But the average literature, too, of *raison d'état* was, without being aware of it, working towards the transformation of the old stoic-Christian world-view in terms of natural law, and towards the relativization of values. It did indeed hold that State, Church and religion existed together in the most natural harmony. None of these thinkers raised

any sort of demand for a State without any religion; many of them still showed the very profound religiosity of the age of religious strife; and they all looked on religion as the indispensable foundation of the State. But, as Kunkel has very profoundly observed, the idea that religion should be fostered for its own sake was in the process allowed by nearly all of them to retire into the background. The practice of quoting from the Bible became less frequent. Religion became an *instrumentum regni*. By means of this cult of *raison d'état*, the special unique value of the State itself slowly and continuously gained in importance until it took its place alongside the old absolute and general values of human life.

The conclusion of the Thirty Years War, which, in the matter of creed, signified a peace of exhaustion, also succeeded in giving a new meaning to the traditional problem of *raison d'état*, of whether religious and ecclesiastical unity was necessary in the State or whether toleration could be allowed. The view that religious unity was desirable was firmly held by all, but more on political than on religious grounds. For the ideal of unity had really moved right out of the religious sphere into the political one. The practical demand was now for unity within the State, to be secured by means of a unity of belief; it was no longer for a unity of belief throughout the whole of Christendom, which was something that, in Kessler's opinion, one might certainly desire but could no longer hope for. We do not have, he remarked (p. 116), a spiritual monarchy in the Christian Church of the present day; rather we have, so to speak, an aristocracy. For there is no one supreme spiritual authority, but rather a number of different worldly authorities, who, as mundane divinities, are entitled to direct affairs according to the pattern and rule of the Word of God. For this reason the conception of *cujus est regio, illius est etiam religio* did not appear to him merely in the light of a historical compromise, a mere ordinance of German State law, but rather as an absolutely proper demand on the part of *raison d'état*. But the political treatment of religion now tended to affect even those minds who were still dogmatically inclined, and gradually make them more tolerant and indolent. 'For if one cannot change something', Kessler says very strikingly, 'one can and must, *pro ratione status*, with all the more justification, let it pass' (p. 203). And so then he taught that it was in no sense permissible to exercise religious intolerance—but at the same time he did indeed make one very elastic exception, namely that against those who were consciously erring and who had relapsed into idolatry wantonly and, as it were, to spite God, it was permissible to have recourse even to corporal and capital punishments; that sects with sacrilegious doctrines, such as the Anabaptists, might be utterly destroyed *ex optima ratione status* (pp. 120 and 146). For the rest, however, the ruler of an impoverished and ruined country

might with a good conscience accept and suffer a number of religions. Even if one wanted to banish such absurd people, one would still not encourage their conversion by doing so! (p. 136).

Thus, when looked at closely, *raison d'état* could now be seen to have arrived for the first time at a halfway stage in its transition from intolerance to tolerance. The modes of thought still bound by dogmatism combined with political mistrust of those professing other creeds to demand that their civic rights in the State should be restricted. Kessler (who once again went further than anybody else) wanted to exclude them from all official positions and from intermarriage with orthodox believers, and for them to be at a disadvantage in criminal jurisprudence. By and large, a restricted tolerance on these lines was still carried on in Germany; thus the theorists were doing nothing at all to hasten on the practice. They should certainly have attempted to do this. Their conception of the State still knew nothing of the rights and claims of individuals and simply culminated in the view that the welfare of the State was to be placed absolutely and exclusively above the welfare of private individuals. But for the commanding greatness of this new idea of the State there would never have existed the intellectual strength necessary to subdue the rights of the aristocracy, and to succeed in procuring for the State the means of power which were indispensable. For the German territorial powers this task was so obvious and pressing that one can well understand why the contemporary thought of the theorists was still constantly much more concerned with it than with the problems of foreign power-policy. Here again it was the question of keeping treaties faithfully that claimed everyone's attention, and the question was usually answered in such a way that exceptions to it were permitted on grounds of *necessitas*. In the selection of just this problem, and in the tendency to avoid a warlike extension of power (which even a Kessler was not quite able to overcome), it can be seen that at bottom their new energy on behalf of the State was still being continually modified and restricted by a strong ethical and legal way of thinking. And the Germans needed peace, after the upheavals of the Thirty Years War. Moreover these books were still being written for the most part, not by rulers, but by subjects, who were generally not able to attain to a complete perception of the more concrete tasks of *raison d'état*. But it was already a lot that now the subjects in Germany had begun to understand the sway of *raison d'état*.

In many ways the picture they had formed for themselves of the growing monarchic State was still veiled in a dark mist. Some of them held that, in order to get information about the sentiments of the subjects, an organized system of espionage was a requirement of monarchical *raison d'état*. Or others advised that mistrust should be sown artificially among the subjects, one against the other, and that a

system of *divide et impera* should be adopted.[1] This advice was particularly recommended to the ruler with respect to his ministers. It reminds one that Louis XIV was acting in this way at the time, in that he played off against one another the two ministerial families of Colbert and Letellier. Nor were the authors at all sparing with quite naïve and pedagogic recommendations of *raison d'état*, taken from Italian literature or from antiquity. In the German State at this time there was a continual fumbling and wavering between desirable activities and real activities. They were expressing one of its most powerful and effective principles when they favoured the prohibition of the principle of primogeniture and yet argued that the partition of national territory amongst the sons of the ruler was an offence against *raison d'état*;[2] or when they made the royal marriage contract subject to the demands of State advantage and yet urged the ruler not to leave the more important decisions to the State council, but rather decide them according to his own personal judgment. The cabinet government, which they recommended at the same time, and which later came to be realized by Frederick William I in Prussia, was already being attempted to a certain extent at the time of the Great Elector. Once again Kessler put his finger very accurately on the important tendencies of the State in this age, when, as a very considerable means of augmenting power, he mentioned that of amalgamating several separate provinces and fiefs into one unified whole, at the expense of the privileged nobles (p. 333).

State welfare before private welfare, that was the hard kernel and the historically fruitful part of their doctrine. Yet this State welfare did not embrace any finer and more spiritual cultural tasks; it restricted itself to the old tasks of looking after religion and law, and the new ones of securing power and fostering the national economy. The idea of the *bonum publicum* still had about it something rigid and abstract, something which stood apart from the real life of the people. It could scarcely be otherwise so long as this idea continued to remain content with the limits set by creed and privilege—limits which were being slackened, some consciously and some unconsciously, by the *raison d'état* of the German territorial rulers.

Thus the doctrine of *raison d'état* corresponded to the most real tendencies of contemporary German State life. We have already remarked that, for this very reason, it aroused violent opposition and provoked indignation and painful feelings of every kind. The most remarkable opposition was certainly that which came, not from the

[1] Both pieces of advice are to be found, e.g. in Sprenger, *Bonus princeps*, pp. 58 ff., although he (as shown above, p. 135) was not of an absolutist point of view.

[2] Cf. Chr. Besold's *Politicorum libri duo*, 1618, p. 714: *ad arcana successivi regni refero, quod principatus minime dividendus est.*

camp of the old vital forces, but from the camp of the new forces that were now rising, from the Age of Enlightenment which was now gradually terminating. After the Thirty Years War one could already hear the first voices of that despairing criticism which, to this very day, is still levelled by humanitarian and pacifist world-citizens at the exercise of *raison d'état*. Amos Comenius, who, although not a German, was still very close to German cultural life, passed judgment on *raison d'état* from the point of view of his new, purely human ideal of life, which completely ignored everything pertaining to the State: 'It means the arbitrary right to do anything which will further one's own advantage, without paying any attention to promises and agreements which are opposed to it. If once one allows it, then all fidelity and belief among men are at an end. . . . It will no longer be right that rules, but power or cunning.' [1]

Nor were the German people themselves at all pleased with the new *raison d'état*. The theorists who were dealing with it, and trying to cleanse it from the stigma of Machiavellism, only reached the social stratum of Germany that was educated and looked up towards the courts. The popular feeling which had no desire to believe in such a purified form of *raison d'état* took refuge in satirical literature. Amongst the most impressive pieces by which Gustav Freytag, in *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, showed the woes of the German people in the seventeenth century and its lifelessness and rigidity after the Thirty Years War, is the cutting satire on *Ratio status* of 1666, which he reprinted.[2] In this a young and promising counsellor of the ruler is taken into the secret chambers where the *arcana status* are to be found: the cloaks of State, masks of State, spectacles of State, eye dust, etc., which are used in the work. Cloaks of State, beautifully trimmed on the outside but shabby on the inside, with names like *salus populi*, *bonum publicum*, *conservatio religionis*, etc., are used when one goes to meet the representatives of the people, when one wishes to make the subjects agree to pay subsidies, or when, under the pretext of a false doctrine, one wants to drive someone out of house and home. One completely threadbare cloak, which is in daily use, is called *Intentio*, good intentions; this is worn, when one is laying new insupportable burdens on the subjects, impoverishing them with forced labour, or inaugurating unnecessary wars. With the various spectacles of State, midges can be made into elephants, or little kindnesses on the part of the ruler can be

[1] *Unum necessarium*, 1668 (edition of 1724, p. 163 f.), cf. Lange, *Histoire de l'internationalisme*, I, 1919, p. 487 f.

[2] For this (vol. 3, ch. 7) he used the work *Idolum principum*, etc., 1678, which according to Kunkel's view however is only a shortened reproduction of the book, *Alamodischer Politicus*, etc., Hamburg, 1666. The example of Boccalini is obvious. Other similar satires are dealt with by Kunkel.

made into supreme acts of mercy. There is an iron instrument with which the ruler can enlarge the gullets of his counsellors, so that they can swallow great pumpkins. Finally, a ball of knotted wire, furnished with sharp needles and heated by a fire within, so that it draws tears from the eyes of the beholder, represents the *Principe* of Machiavelli. The ruler is keeping this in hand too *pro secreto politico*, but so far he has not yet used it, for his subjects are docile and he does not wish to pollute his name publicly. Then naturally too, the counsellors themselves are using their own private *ratio status* for enriching themselves quite shamelessly. One of them actually proposes that the cohabitation of married couples should be taxed, in order to raise money for the *miles perpetuus*.

Who would venture, on the basis of this ferocious caricature, to judge the true character of the statecraft of German rulers of the time? But neither is it represented in its entirety by the polished doctrine of the theorists. Both together indicate the two extremes, within which the real life of the German territorial State, as we know it from its acts, moved to and fro. The moral justification of its activity, which was disputed by some contemporaries (especially by those whom it disturbed in the enjoyment of their privileges), has on the whole been restored to it by modern research. It did not lose ground, but slowly gained it in the life of the German States, and the work done towards forming the States in the later seventeenth century constitutes a preliminary stage in the rise of the German spirit which took place in the eighteenth century. But the ethical analyses, to which all action prompted by *raison d'état* is always and everywhere being subjected, were particularly plentiful just at this time; for there was now growing up for the first time a class of officials with feelings of devotion towards the State, whilst the tasks of acquiring power both within and without the State (tasks which fell to these officials) were increasing very much more swiftly. But the doctrine of *raison d'état* also played its part in the education of the feelings of these officials towards the State.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BEST INTEREST OF THE STATE IN FRANCE AT THE TIME OF RICHELIEU

(1) THE BEGINNINGS AND THE *DISCOURS* OF 1624

NOT only the modern State but also the spirit of modern historical research has become imbued with the doctrine of *raison d'état*. It has produced, in the doctrine of the Best Interest of the State (a separate branch which developed out of it), an important basic element of modern historicism. We have already considered the approaches to this doctrine, namely in Boccalini and Campanella. We must now turn back still further to more general considerations of the problem and to the starting point of the whole movement, that is to say, to Machiavelli.

The doctrine of *raison d'état*, as developed since the time of Botero, remained as we have seen still firmly within the boundaries of the General Theory of the State. This latter theory, after the pattern of Aristotle, studied the nature of the separate forms of the State, but at the same time assessed (by standards valid for all time) the different individual forms actually exemplified by existing States. In the last resort this theory concentrated on the inquiry as to the best possible kind of State. As against this, the doctrine of the Best Interest of the State did not concern itself at all with the question of what was the best possible kind of State, but only with contemporary States as they existed individually in the present moment of time. But these States were examined minutely by the theory, to find out how they were likely to behave and what was to be expected from them in the future. This investigation could only be successful if one could discover the special law which determined the mode of behaviour of each separate State, and thus firmly establish what was permanent and ever-recurring in the dazzling variation of its political actions. It was therefore fundamentally

the kind of purely practical inquiry which occupies a chess-player, or anyone who watches a game of chess with interest in order to learn something from it for himself. The particular interests of one's own State drove one on to understand the special and constant Laws of Motion governing the foreign States, so that one should be able to adapt oneself accordingly. By a retrospective survey one quickly learnt to understand even one's own best interest more profoundly, and one was also enabled to raise the sense of what was in one's own best interest from a level of naïve instinct and unregulated desire to a level of reflective consciousness and clarified rational volition. While seeking to estimate the inner motives of rivals, one also grew more used to calculating the rules governing one's own actions and to applying these rules in a more direct fashion, less troubled by the passions and by momentary impulses. In this way it became possible for national behaviour to turn into a real political science. This tendency towards the development of an actual and teachable political science could then indeed lead back to the method of that General Doctrine of the State which sought the unhistorical Ideal of the best possible State. One could as a result also inquire which was the best political science and, from the mass of accounts of individual experience and rules of conduct in political action, assemble what was most useful into a canon of prescriptions, a text-book of political science, which could be employed by any State. In earlier years, in the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, this tendency was stronger than in later years, and the reason for this is perfectly clear. The empirical sense which was awakening in modern man was still restricted and tinged with the old dogmatic spirit. For this reason the new experimental material of political behaviour was itself still conceived to begin with in strongly dogmatic and schematic terms. So, from the standpoint of a historian of human thought, there is the greatest fascination in observing how the general theory of political science gradually yielded before the doctrine of the best interests of particular States.

It was indeed just as difficult then as now to separate clearly the work done towards the two doctrines; and it was equally the case that the validity of one doctrine in no way excluded that of the other. It was perfectly possible to imagine a general doctrine of statecraft, which would be founded on the most exact appreciation of all the individual differences between them, and which would yet seek out the permanent element amongst what was changeable, and the universal element amongst what was individual. And, looking at it the other way round, it would also be bound to happen that a study of the particular interests of States would lead on as a matter of course to the problem of how the universal element in them was related to the individual, and the permanent to the changeable. In this connection there was also a

danger, particularly in the earlier period, of premature generalization and excessive simplification of things. But the aims which were being pursued did to a certain extent offer a protection against this danger. If, for example, one sought to recognize the constant interests in an individual State, then one had to be on one's guard against making them too constant and too rigid, if one was not to atone for one's error in practice. In this matter, any excessive hypothesizing threatened to become a source of error, which would lead to a false estimate of one's rival, and thus also to a false attitude towards him on one's own part. The customary conception of history at this period, being steeped in the humanistic view of antiquity, looked on the ancient traditional ideas as being permanently valid prototypes even of the modern State activity; it believed in the eternal cycle and in the repetition of everything human, and thus it tried to see in everything individual, everything of a new or peculiar kind which it encountered in historical life, only examples of something universally typical. Whereas it was possible for an observation of foreign States, which was carried out in pursuit of practical aims, to get very much closer to the individual element in those States (for the very reason that it always had a continual fresh supply of experience to draw from), without however omitting to notice whatever typical element there was present. It was true, of course, that this mode of perception, which was brought to fruition under the stimulus of self-interest and experience, had its own limitations and stumbling-blocks. Just as it had all the advantages, so it had all the weaknesses, of an exclusively empirical and utilitarian approach to things. It tended to break off at the point where further practical results were no longer forthcoming; and consequently it did not always feel the need to connect together and organize systematically the individual characteristics which had been well and freshly observed. As a result of this, it also failed to reach the same degree of real intellectual and formal perfection as the general doctrine of the State. Moreover it was by nature tendentious when it came to be used directly in the service of a particular State, and to a certain extent it had even to be propagandist in its effect. It obviously happened then that the motives of one's opponent were not only exposed quite without sympathy, but were even blackened and caricatured, whilst one's own motives were partly veiled and partly idealized. But this veiling and touching-up is quite easy to remove from the pictures which are presented to us here. Frequently, too, they constitute involuntary self-confessions. So they do not really impair the value which this mode of observation, conducted by clever men, possessed for the political and intellectual development of those times, or indeed the value which it still has today for the historical understanding of State activity.

It was the diplomat, sending in his reports, who was the acknowledged

discoverer of the theory of the interests of States. If he was one of those who took his work more seriously, he could not rest content with merely reporting what had occurred and what had been achieved, with sketching the characters of people and collecting statistical material about the forces of the foreign State; he also found himself compelled to try and bring events, plans and the possibilities at any particular time, over one common denominator. So it is that the beginnings of the new doctrine reach back to the beginnings of modern diplomacy—to what was for it the classic period of Machiavelli. Here too, once again, the Renaissance reveals itself as the native soil from which the modern spirit grew.

It is impossible to exaggerate the energy and acuteness with which Machiavelli strove to discern the hidden springs in the political mechanism, and bring to light the strongest and principal motives of the agents. But the agents, into whose hearts he knew how to gaze, were for the most part not yet State personalities; rather, they were the personalities of people who held a *stato* in their hands, and for him the chief meaning of *stato* still practically amounted to 'power-apparatus'. In spite of the profound insight which he had already achieved into the inner structure of the State and also, by means of his doctrine of *virtù*, into the connection between inner national vitality and outward political power, he still permitted this background and the presuppositions that lay behind the operations of power-policy to fade out of the picture, when he came to try and calculate directly these operations themselves; he contented himself then with the easier task (which was also more attractive to him) of judging what was expedient in the actions of the individual statesman. This was one limitation of his perception, and the other limitation (closely connected with it) was that he, in accordance with his didactic tendency, really only wanted to bring out what was typical and general in all political conduct: that he wanted to establish certain rules, definite maxims easily intelligible and applicable, for every ruler and for every conceivable instance in the dazzling kaleidoscope of the political world; and this also led to the result that he remained firmly under the influence of that view of history which held that everything human repeated itself. For posterity however, what he presented with this kind of generalizing and didactic intention, very often takes on all the fascination of a genuinely historical view which fuses together inseparably and intuitively both the individual and the typical elements. Altogether then the remarkable power of attraction which Machiavelli exerts on thinking men today rests on the fact that his thoughts often contain some concealed driving-force which leads on beyond themselves, in such a way that he frequently offers much more than he is directly intending to offer. It is thus possible too for Machiavelli to work out, with the greatest significance and clarity, the fixed interests

of States. With a masterly brevity and precision he characterized the union of common political interests which was possessed (and of necessity) by the pentarchy of the five larger Italian States in the face of the invasion of Charles VIII. *Questi potentati avevano ad avere due cure principali: l'una, che un forestiero non entrasse in Italia per l'armi; l'altra, che nessuno di loro occupasse più Stato* (*Principe*, ch. 11). One realizes at once, without it being expressed, how short-lived this system would be; the certainty that it would collapse completely, once it was broken in one place.[1]

Most of all, one also feels very strongly here the directly tragic experience which was to offer a source of perception. The collapse of the Italian Pentarchy, and the consequent inevitable entanglement, rearrangement and subordination of all political interests of the Italian States within the European power relationships, continually forced the Italian statesman to study with equal attention both very wide and very narrow relationships. There came into being the art of observation exemplified by the Venetian Relations. This method did indeed always show a preference for the bare particulars with which one was used to dealing in Venice, and it scarcely ever rose to a more universal and constructive outlook. But it did tacitly presuppose (as has been said) that 'the movements of politics proceeded from the deep-rooted vital forces of States'; and after the middle of the sixteenth century, it did succeed in arriving at a clearer formulation of the perception that the supra-personal *interessi di stato* governed the conduct of individual States, uniting one, and disuniting another.[2] This method of observation involved the view (also accepted by Machiavelli) that every particular *interesse di stato* proceeded from what, since the middle of the sixteenth century, had been called *ragione di stato*; that is to say, from the general rule that every State is impelled by the egoism of its own profit and advantage, and ruthlessly silences every other motive—though at the same time an essential assumption is tacitly made, that this *ragione di stato* must always refer solely to what is deliberately and rationally seen to be advantageous, quite purified of any merely instinctive greed. One can only begin to believe in the favour of a ruler, if it is supported by *ragione di stato*. One recognizes the fact that a Pope, for instance, may on some occasion find himself unable to choose between *affetto d'amore* and *ragione di stato*; but one can never feel any doubt that, 'whether on

[1] Cf. also E. W. Mayer, *Machiavellis Geschichtsauffassung und sein Begriff virtù*, p. 37, on Machiavelli's ability to take up different political points of view. Reference may also be made to Vettori's letter to Machiavelli of 12th July 1513 (*Lettere familiari di M. ed. Alvisi*), in which he tried to discover and define the particular interests of all the powers operating in Italy at that time.

[2] Andreas, *Die venezianischen Relationen und ihr Verhältnis zur Kultur der Renaissance*, pp. 58 ff. It also contains evidence for what follows. According to his findings, the slogan of *ragione di stato* first appeared there in 1567.

grounds of reason or necessity', two States which are made dependent on each other by their interests will remain bound together, even if there should be a complete lack of mutual sympathy. It was also recognized further, that the play of these interests had at the same time both a constant and a changeable aspect, if for instance one understood the policy of the Duke of Savoy, which, though changeable from day to day in its friendships, still endeavoured for that very reason *di governarsi con propria regola di stato in tutte le cose.*

But the purpose of the Relations, which were only intended to give information from time to time about the particular situation in a particular individual country, put a certain restriction on these fruitful speculations. The Relations could not rise to the level of an all-embracing systematic investigation of these State interests (the existence of which was quite generally assumed), far less therefore to the level of a composite picture of their European inter-relations.

So far as we can see, the first attempt to give such a picture was made in France at the time of Richelieu.

With this event, the empirical spirit of the new period advanced to a new stage. And the growing interest directed towards understanding in a universal and comprehensive fashion the particular motive forces of individual States gave an indication that these motive forces themselves had begun to pass on to a higher stage of their development, that they had begun to differentiate themselves more strongly one from another and that each had begun to shape out its own special and national existence—one of the most important turning-points in the modern development of the State.

One can readily understand that it was not in Italy, the classic native land of modern statecraft, but on the contrary in France, that the new feeling arose. Italy provided the political thinker with the choicest material for observation in the form of small States and petty despots, who were accustomed to keeping their heads above water only by exercising a masterly technical skill in the matter of spying out and making use of human passions and weaknesses. Hence arose the tendency to produce general recipe-books of *arcana imperii*, a kind of psychology for practical use in politics.

In spite of all the interest shown in the policy and governmental methods of the existing great powers, there was a complete absence of the impulse (which can only be aroused by a participation in the misfortune and destiny of a great State) to rise above the mere application of human knowledge, and to comprehend, not only the subjective aspect of statecraft, but also the objective inter-connections of State activity. But in France people had been forced out of this petty preoccupation with self-interest by the bitter experiences of the Huguenot Wars. It was, in fact, just this profound religious and political division

of the nation that brought political thought to fruition and impelled it to seek out a new intellectual and spiritual cohesive force for a State threatened with dissolution. As we have already seen, a cohesive force of this kind on a grand scale was provided by Bodin's doctrine of the sovereignty and centralization of State authority. And another such cohesive force, too, would be the recognition of the true collective interest of the whole of France, which was at present obscured by the fanaticism of the opposing parties. The problem of the division of creed led directly on to the supreme political problem of French power and independence in Europe; for the ruthless struggle over the old Church could not fail to drive the State into the arms of Spain and to lead to the abandonment of all those power-aims which could only be achieved by struggling against Spain. After 1562 there arose the party of the *Politiques* who recognized this fact, and who at once concentrated all their energies on establishing once more a real peace by granting toleration to the Huguenots; and then they also went on (and in this they quickly found themselves at one with the Huguenots) to take up a political front against Spain. The fact that the modern idea of toleration is founded on realistic policy appears very clearly here. The true interest of France made it imperative to exercise toleration, in order to keep the State free from foreign influence and to enable its strength to be deployed abroad.

These ideas of the *Politiques* (which have been described, somewhat erroneously, as 'the first signs of Chauvinism' [1]) continued to shine right through the following decades like a guiding star above the thunder-clouds of the Civil War. They came to be realized in the monarchy and in the system of Henry IV. His death once more threw France off the path of a rational policy of interest. But the tradition of the *Politiques* remained alive, and re-awoke at the very moment when France was preparing once more to take up the work which had been begun by Henry IV but interrupted by his death, and to enter the lists against Spain. At the beginning of the 1620's, thinking politicians in France were painfully conscious of the loss in European power which their country had suffered owing to the internal chaos of the regency and on account of the weak attitude of the Queen-Regent Maria and the first advisers of Louis XIII towards Spain. Spain was about to strike at the land-routes, which led from Milan by way of the Valtelline, over the Passes of the Grisons, and across the Austrian countryside on the Upper Rhine. Together with the Emperor, Spain dominated Western Germany, and also dominated (it was generally assumed) imperial policy; with the result that sooner or later Spain might become permanently established on the territory of the Upper Rhine, and the

[1] Cf. de Crue, *Le parti des Politiques au lendemain de la Saint-Barthélemy*, 1892, p. 253.

Republic of the Netherlands might be completely overthrown. Simultaneously, since the summer of 1623, negotiations had been going on for a marriage between Charles, the heir to the English throne, and a Spanish infanta, which might very possibly lead to England becoming tied to the Spanish system for some considerable time to come. It certainly seemed high time that France tore herself free from these clutches; and just as Henry IV had succeeded formerly, by means of an internal pacification of the parties, in deploying abroad once again the strength of his country, so also it now appeared that with the Peace of Montpellier, which the government concluded in 1622 with the Huguenot rebels, the internal split had been resolved once more, and the possibility was created for a new deployment of power abroad.

It was in this situation that there appeared the book entitled *Discours des Princes et Estats de la Chrestienté plus considerables à la France, selon leurs diverses qualitez et conditions.*

It exists in two editions, the first of which appeared towards the turn of the years 1623–4, and the second (an edition which expanded the book in some places and shortened it in others) can be dated pretty exactly as having appeared at the end of March or beginning of April 1624 [1] —that is to say, shortly before Richelieu began to take part in the counsels of the King, which occurred on 24th April 1624. The authorship has been ascribed to no less important a person than Father

[1] The first edition is reprinted in the collection *Le Mercure d'Estat ou Recueil de divers discours d'Estat*, 1635, pp. 293 to 400; and hence mentioned briefly in connection with his subject by Kaeber, *Die Idee des europäischen Gleichgewichts in der publizistischen Literatur vom 16. bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (1907). Kaeber errs in dating the book as 1620 or 1622. A more certain *terminus post quem* is obtained from the mention of the election of Pope Urban VIII, which took place in August 1623. Moreover the negotiations for the English-Spanish marriage are mentioned as being still in the balance, but already beginning to break down. In fact the negotiations had almost collapsed when at the beginning of October 1623 the Prince of Wales came back to England from Madrid. A *terminus ante quem* may perhaps be deduced from the manner in which mention is made on p. 345 of the discussions on the Valtelline question which took place in Rome in 1623–4. The author is apparently still unaware of the unfavourable turn (for France) which the negotiations took after the beginning of March 1624, on account of the concessions made independently by the French Ambassador Sillery (Zeller, *Richelieu et les ministres de Louis XIII*, 1621–4, p. 272).—The second edition is printed in the *Mercure françois X* (1625), pp. 16–94, and mentioned as having appeared at the beginning of 1624. Here it says (in a longer note on the German relationships) on p. 61, that the Duke of Bavaria was invested '13 months ago' with the electoral dignity of the Palatinate. The investiture took place on the 25th February 1623. Moreover in this edition the author is in the greatest anxiety about the outcome of the negotiations for the English-Spanish marriage. Thus he is not yet aware of the definitive breaking off of the negotiations by England, which was announced at the beginning of April 1624 (Ranke, *Engl. Geschichte*, 2, 159). A second printing of the second edition is to be found in the *Recueil de quelques discours politiques, escrits sur diverses occurences des affaires et Guerres Estrangeres depuis quinze ans en ça. 1632*, pp. 161 ff.

Joseph, Richelieu's intimate friend and assistant; [1] though up to the present it has not been proved that there is anything more than a possibility that he might have been the author. It is certain, however, that the author of the book was a man of first-rate political training and wide information; and it is also certain that his work was more or less closely connected with the ascending fortunes of Richelieu. It belongs to a whole group of pamphlets, which appeared during those years, and in which the French nationalist ideas of the former *Politiques*, the 'good Frenchmen' (as they now called themselves), came to life once more in the form of a reaction against the Spanish-Catholic line taken by Luynes. During those same weeks in which the work must have originated, Father Joseph was actually living with Richelieu; and Richelieu himself was struggling hard to win the King over to a policy of glory and grandeur, and combat the weak policy of the existing minister, in order thereby to pave his own way to the ministry.[2] Other possibilities, however, must be considered, besides that of Richelieu's circle. The

[1] Dedouvres, *Le père Joseph Polémiste* (1623–6 (1895)), in his very industrious but dilettante book, has tried to attribute to Father Joseph the authorship of a whole series of anonymous pamphlets in this year, including our *Discours* (which he was only familiar with in the second edition). But his methods are sharply opposed by two such eminent scholars as Fagniez, the biographer of Father Joseph, and Kükelhaus (in the *Revue des questions historiques*, 60, 442 ff., *Histor. Zeitschrift*, 79, 327 ff.). In actual fact, a large part of the arguments adduced by Dedouvres for Father Joseph's authorship of the *Discours* are of an extremely vague and uncertain character. But the similarities of style and language, which Dedouvres shows between the *Discours* and the undoubted writings of Father Joseph, demand some respect. Certainly this does not amount to any overwhelming proof. Dedouvres relies on the close affinity between the *Discours* and a *Mémoire* of Father Joseph's of 1617, which Fagniez, *Le père Joseph et Richelieu*, 2, 467 ff., has published. This affinity has been completely denied by Fagniez (*Rev. des quest. hist.*, 60, 479). There is indeed no affinity of thought and content, but a very stiff and at the same time expressive style is common to both works. Of course, one can say this about many other products of French literature at this time.—On the other hand, it could be adduced against the authorship of Father Joseph, that the judgments in the *Turciade* of Father Joseph (quoted by Dedouvres himself on 1, 61 f.) about the friends and opponents of the House of Hapsburg show a Catholic tinge which is completely lacking from the corresponding judgments in the *Discours*. But this could in any case be explained by reference to the situation and the political aims.—One might perhaps also consider whether the *Discours* could have been written by Fancan, the zealous publicist who assisted Richelieu. But the character of the writing is quite different from what one knows of Fancan's. Fancan specialized in German relations, whereas these are only treated quite summarily in the first edition of our work, and the second edition only says quite common-place things about them. Moreover the book is entirely lacking in the *parfum de huguenoterie*, which Hanotaux (*Richelieu*, 2, 2, 468) has described as characteristic of all Fancan's writings. And finally it is not mentioned in the list of Fancan's writings which have been treated by Kükelhaus (*Histor. Vierteljahrschrift*, 2, 22 ff.).

[2] Report of the Venetian Ambassador, of 28th Nov. 1623, in Zeller, *loc. cit.*, 267; cf. Dedouvres, 45.

author might also have been in close touch with the Connétable Lesdiguières; for this former Protestant (who had negotiated the Peace of Montpellier) was also strongly in favour of taking up again the policy of Henry IV, and particularly advocated (just as the author of our book did) a struggle for the Valtelline and a closer union with the Italian rulers.[1]

This is not the place, however, to deal with the contemporary significance of the book for French policy at the time, and we must pass on. We shall only use it to show how the vital impulses in the sphere of the European States were reflected in contemporary minds, and what it was capable of offering towards a deeper historical and political understanding.

What it had to offer was considerable, and is in no way impaired by the shortcomings in the form of the work. The ponderous diction may be excused on account of the existing state of French prose; and in any case, in the matter of flexibility, it still surpasses the style of German political writings of the time. Though copiously sprinkled with historical facts and allusions, it never becomes bogged down among crude matters of fact and antiquarian detail; on the contrary, it gathers all the historical threads tightly together in the service of the immediate political aim. Historical knowledge is, for the author, a prerequisite of all political thought and action. 'The best advice one can give in matters of State', thus it begins, 'is based on special knowledge of the State itself.' One must know what the State is in itself and what relation it bears to other States, how it is governed, what the relationship is between ruler and subjects, and how it behaves with reference to foreign countries. For there exists—and here speaks the bitter experience of half a century of French history—a necessary and inevitable correlation between internal and external affairs, good as well as bad, and the slightest disorder within the State has its effect on the conduct of foreign powers towards it; whereas every internal gain in strength leads on at once to the task of repairing the damage which has taken place in the outward situation of the State during its convulsions and sicknesses. For, since all rulers in the world are only guided by their own interests, and their impulse to action comes from the fortune or misfortune of their neighbours,[2] who can doubt that a sovereign, who is weak and not respected by his subjects, will be considered by his neighbours and allies to be of less importance than a ruler who enjoys obedience and

[1] Lesdiguières stayed chiefly at the Court during the year 1623, and worked for his policy there. Moreover Lesdiguières' favourite project at that time—namely, that of joining Savoy in the conquest of Genoa—is hinted at in the *Discours* (*Recueil*, p. 314). Cf. Dufuyard, *Lesdguières*, pp. 527 and 532 ff.

[2] *Puisque ce qu'il y a de Princes au monde, ne se gouverne que par les interests et ne se meut qu'au bransle de la bonne ou mauvaise fortune des autres.*

fear in his own country? In the last troubled times of King Henry III, France found herself being treated quite badly by old allies and friends; whereas immediately after Henry IV's internal victory almost all the European powers, with the exception of the House of Austria, drew closer to France, in order that by uniting themselves with her they could re-establish the balance of power against Austria. The French body politic was, by the mercy of God, quite sound; and so now once more, after a happy settlement of the internal confusion, the time had come to take up one's position again in the face of the foreign powers. And it was worth studying these foreign powers now, in order to know what there was to be hoped or feared from each of them.

The States of Europe were to be viewed and depicted, then, solely from the point of view of the special interests of France; and Europe alone was to constitute the range of vision. For this reason, therefore, the author specifically refused to consider the Spanish sphere of power beyond the seas. This also shows, what can still be observed in all attempts of this kind, namely that the practical political aim was always bound to narrow down the field of view. In return for this, the political aim sharpened one's perception for the business of distinguishing all the peculiar phenomena inside the field of vision. One or two examples will be enough to show this.

First and foremost, a very significant and clear picture is given of the Spanish power in Europe: its various main and subordinate spheres, its resources, and its principles and methods of government. Then, with a general survey of its geographical disposition throughout Southern and Western Europe, we are shown how it is linked together in the form of a chain and joins hands with the German and East European possessions of the House of Hapsburg, so that it threatens to encircle all the States lying in between. Its immediate appearance is that of a still unfinished system of waterways, whose aim it must be to clear out of the way all those obstacles to union which lie in between; then, particularly, it becomes obvious why the Valtelline is important, *comme une galerie et un chemin aisé entre les montagnes pour passer de l'une à l'autre*. From this composite picture one gets a distinct idea of the main territory of Spain, entrenched behind its Pyrenean rampart which seems to have been created by nature as if for an exalted type of fortification, dominating everything around (*comme un cavalier eslevé pour lui commander*); a picture of a land complete and at unity with itself ever since the Grandees had lost their political power a hundred years before, of a country which is underpopulated and yet capable of exerting immense strength in order to keep neighbouring countries under its yoke. The different methods of ruling these neighbouring countries are very subtly dealt with. It is true that throughout all these countries there are strongholds held by Spanish garrisons, and that the

higher posts are filled by officials who are Spanish or hold Spanish views; but the mode of rule in Naples is remarkably different from that in Sicily, and that in Milan is different again. The population of Naples, indeed, is just as inflammable and easily excited as that of Sicily; but Naples, so full of turbulence and the love of change, has to be strictly disciplined by the Spanish yoke (the only one perhaps, in the experience of history, which has been capable of doing this), and so there a forced obedience is the most that can be achieved; whereas in Sicily (which had formerly submitted of its own accord to the Spanish crown) one can count on a voluntary obedience, and it is therefore possible to reduce the pressure and respect the old freedoms and privileges, in order not to irritate a people so difficult to propitiate once they are aroused. In Milan one adopts a middle way between these two methods, because the Lombards are somewhat heavy and crude, and therefore easier to keep in order. Milan is at the same time the key to all the other Spanish lands, the assembly point for its armies destined for Germany, Franche Comté and Flanders, more easily accessible to Spain than Naples on account of the harbour of Genoa; and then again, although basically Genoa shares the common Italian hatred of Spain, Genoa's function as Spanish banker ensures that her interests are bound up with those of Spain. But for Milan, Spain could not hold Naples. As a starting-point for her struggles to extend her territorial possessions, Spain very wisely did not choose Naples (where she would have come into conflict with the Holy See), but instead Milan, where step by step she acquired Monaco, Finale, Piombino, etc. And even if Milan should lie under the hostile glances of Venice and Savoy, yet in exchange the Spaniards could enjoy the favour of other neighbours of Milan, namely Genoa and the five Catholic cantons of Switzerland; and so now Spain could strive to establish herself permanently in the Valtelline and the Grisons, in order to achieve union with Germany and Austria across seas and mountains.

The author has a special genius for, so to speak, classifying what is individual: he first conceives the whole of a complex phenomenon in terms of those characteristics which are common to it and run right through it, and then proceeds to illuminate the differences and particularities contained in it right down to the very innermost recesses, but then he always returns once again to the total impression and to the lessons which are to be drawn from it. Thus the States of non-Spanish Italy present themselves to him first and foremost in the shape of a unity, held together by a common hatred of the Spanish yoke and by a common fear of Spanish power. At the same time, with appreciable objectivity, he also allows some validity to the Spanish argument that it was by virtue of Spanish rule that Italy, previously riven by internecine struggles, first received the great boon of complete peace. And

honourably enough he does point out that even France would have been hated by the Italians, if perhaps she had taken up the position held by Spain in Italy. But France could now pluck the fruits of Spanish greatness, since all those who were suffering from Spain would be seeking a French alliance. These again were all behaving differently towards Spain, each according to its special powers and peculiarities. The smallest—Mantua, Modena, Parma, Urbino—were humbling themselves before Spain, and seeking to secure themselves against her as well as possible by means of a loyal attachment which was really unworthy of sovereign States. Even the Grand Duke of Florence flattered the King of Spain, if only by the act of turning his back on him and working against him. Whereas Venice and the Pope behaved differently, and each of these again in his own way. The Pope had the advantage of the respect which Spain had to pay him as the head of Christendom; so resolute did he seem to be against Spain, that he refused to allow even the most insignificant of the interests over which they quarrelled to be wrested from him. Venice, courageous and self-assured, did not indeed defy Spain, but protected herself against the other by a wise policy and by secretly supporting the enemies of Spain. Savoy, who, to the great regret of the rest of Italy, had formerly taken the Spanish side, was now just as much on the defensive against her. This little country was specially important both for Spain and for France, and was finding it difficult to stand well with both of them at the same time; she aroused the suspicion first of one, then of the other, and assiduously made use of this device in order to advance her interests wherever possible with everybody.

Then too the pictures drawn of the power-methods and power-aims of the individual Italian States are little vignettes. Especially Venice, that instructress in Renaissance statecraft, must have induced the political portraitist to give of his best. He is full of admiration for the excellent arrangement and prudent foundations of her domestic economy. The Venetians can do as much with one thaler, as others can with two. It is 'no small secret' of their successful rule on the mainland that they are able to lay upon their subjects a burden which is quite heavy, but yet is evenly distributed. To judge the extent of their sea-power, one has to have seen their arsenal. Better to say nothing at all about it than next to nothing—it offers sufficient evidence for the greatness of their courage and might. And in actual fact the might of Venice is not to be wondered at, for the city itself, in its marine situation, can never be conquered. It was therefore possible, as had happened once already through the League of Cambrai, to take the whole of the mainland territory, and still not strike at the heart of the State; so that it could always rise again afterwards and win back what had been lost. But although her power was great, Venice always seemed

to be concerned only with maintaining that power, and not with increasing it, and this was understandable when one considered the neighbours and opponents who hemmed her in, Spain by land and the Turks by sea—besides the Emperor and the Archdukes of Friuli and the Pope. It was a bad thing to make war on the Pope, for one always had to give back again what one had taken from him. That was a principle of practical politics founded on experience which could also be found in Machiavelli and Guicciardini, Botero, Boccalini and Campanella [1]—Venice was therefore '*mal envoisiné*', and had no hope of increasing her territory. She had already achieved a lot by not losing anything. But in order to maintain her position amongst such enemies Venice had to seek alliances for herself throughout the world, without regard for religious denomination. Thus fifteen years previously she had, through the good offices of Henry IV, allied herself with the Republic of the Netherlands, with whom in spite of the great distance, she was able to have intercourse by sea. In the same way moreover with the Swiss cantons of Berne and Zürich, and with the Grisons; and so too she sought an understanding with the German Protestants, even with Bethlen Gabor himself, and valued friendship with France above anything else.

From this and similar descriptions all through the book, one realizes that what the author is aiming at is to explain the action of a delicate piece of clockwork, and, on the basis of the nature, the strength and the relative positioning of its springs, to demonstrate the inevitably certain quality of its oscillations. It scarcely needs to be said, of course, that to the eyes of a modern historian much is still lacking. That more profound insight, which behind the polished exterior of Venetian statecraft would detect the essential torpidity and aimlessness of this body politic, is not yet present. All the attention is concentrated on the present and the immediate future; so far none is directed towards the more distant historical perspectives. Since the purpose of the whole book is to incite the French government to make a struggle for the Valtelline, the rest of Europe is given disproportionate and less forcible treatment. On the subject of the uncertain and fluid situation of Germany, for instance, the author has nothing to say, for the reason that one must first wait and see what the outcome will be there.[2] He still has no idea of the significant part which the Scandinavian powers will play in the forthcoming

[1] Machiavelli, *Principe*, ch. 11; Guicciardini, *Ricordi pol. et civ.*, no. 29: *La chiesa . . . non muore mai*; Botero, *Della ragion di stato*, Bk. II, *capi di prudenza*; Boccalini, *Bilancia politica* 1, 7; Campanella, *Monarchia nationum* (Amabile, *Camp. ne'castelli di Napoli*, etc., 2, 334): *Sempre chi hà voluto nocer al papa ha perduto.*

[2] The second edition of the *Discours* does indeed include a longer passage about Germany, but it is of a different character from the treatment of the other countries and States. Instead of giving individual characteristics, it simply describes the contemporary events of the German War from 1618 onwards. The reason given for this

European crises. But then again in what he has to say about the Netherlands he shows a very lively sense of the compelling forces of history. By a fortunate instinct he emphasizes here for the first time the part which the Dutch will play in the system of European States. By having provided a counterpoise for several decades against the greatness of Spain and Austria, they have earned the thanks of the whole of the rest of Christendom. Their State, born and grown robust in the midst of storms and dangers, seems to the author to be the achievement of moral energies. It was once true, he remarks, that this State was set up and held by the force of despair; but now it is maintained by the force of its own courage and abilities. But here again one sees at the same time the limits of his insight. For the very reason that in politics he is unaffected by any prejudice of creed, he is quite indifferent to the religious source of these energies, the political effect of which make such a strong impression on him. He is all the more forcibly struck by the spectacle of the expansion of material power on the part of the Netherlands; by their mastery of the sea, which gives them everything in superfluity, although they grow nothing themselves; by the prosperity of their industry and commerce in wartime, where the noise of war is heard only on the fringe near the frontier, whilst the rest of the country contributes to the defence of the frontiers by its settled organization and taxes. With an exemplary historical and political insight he passed judgment on the most recent crisis in the internal life of the Republic, the struggle between Maurice of Nassau and Oldenbarneveldt. He believed that the constitution of the Netherlands was intended to ensure the freedom of the individual provinces. But that nevertheless they had, on grounds of *raison d'état*, made a certain sacrifice in freedom, when they suppressed the Arminian party by means of an encroachment (which was possibly illegal) by the federal State on the rights of the provincial States. It was to the advantage of the tranquillity and welfare of these peoples that this should happen, although it bore harshly on individuals. For they found they could not do without the Prince of Orange, who was their very sword and buckler, even though he, who had hitherto been only the commander of their armies, should now make himself almost a sovereign by overthrowing his enemies within the State. The harsh political doctrine that necessity knows no law was also applied by the author to yet another case. The Dutch had now seized Emden and several of the forts built by Mansfeld, and had thus got East Friesia into their power—

is that, several years before, *un discours à part sur le sujet de l'Empire et de ses Princes* had appeared (*Mercure françois*, 10, 60). This is perhaps a reference to the *Discours de l'Empire et des princes et estats d'Allemagne* of November 1618, which is contained (see above, p. 153 n.) in the *Recueil de quelques discours politiques*, 1632, pp. 55 ff. This does not necessarily mean that this discourse is attributable to the author of our *Discours*. For why does he not refer to it already in the first edition, in order to account for his cursory treatment of Germany?

excusables en ceste usurpation, puis que leur ennemi à sa faveur s'en fust emparé.

After the Netherlands, which at that time had reached the height of their historical significance, the England of that period, under James I, does not seem to be examined so closely in the description of the States with which France had to deal. Nevertheless the author knows very well that England must in reality be assessed as the third power in Europe after France and Spain, unassailable by virtue of her insular situation, powerful by sea, capable of making an attack herself and desirable as an ally for every other State. Henry VIII, he goes on, understood how to form a counterpoise against both the great powers struggling together on the Continent, letting himself be feared and cajoled by both, and he knew how to carry this system through, even after he had broken with Rome. And Elizabeth continued to show her power with the same decisiveness; through her, at first secret, and then finally open support of the rebellion in the Netherlands, she had brought upon the Spaniards the loss of a part of this country, and then after the great victory over the Armada she had carried the war right to the very coast of Spain and to the Indies, *aimant mieux la guerre que la paix avec un si puissant ennemi.* Thus one can understand why, after the peace which was concluded with England in 1604, Spain eagerly strove to win for herself the friendship of this dangerous power—even if it was only in order to feel secure from her in the Netherlands.

We do not wish to exaggerate the importance of the book, nor would we rank the unknown author actually amongst the foremost political and historical writers of the century, though the book would not be unworthy of any of them. The subtlety and acuteness shown in its depiction of the various related political interests is shared by many a diplomat and political writer amongst the Latin peoples. We have before us here only a perfect example, out of a whole school, a whole tendency, of political thought. Many of his individual judgments betray the fact that he was familiar with the Italian literature of *ragione di stato*. But he raised himself above it in his attitude to things by his treatment of Europe as a collective whole; and, so far as we can see, he was the first to attempt this. The period itself did indeed exert an educative influence towards thinking of Europe as a collective whole; for, besides the fact that the fate of the Netherlands (and consequently that of the whole of Western Europe) was still undecided, the outbreak of the Thirty Years War and the stirrings of a great new ambition on the part of France heralded the appearance of imminent crises in the fate of Central and Southern Europe, and the threads of all these problems were inextricably intermingled. In the course of the dramatic conflict, which was to decide the outcome of the religious wars and thereby also the spiritual future of Europe, there re-appeared once again

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that tendency towards pure power politics which had already flourished at the time of Machiavelli—but enriched this time by an insight into wider and more comprehensive relationships, by a clearer perception of the connection between unity and order within the State and an external manifestation of power, by a developed sense of the significance of the really great and dominating powers, and (last but not least) by a conscious reaction against permitting ecclesiastical and denominational considerations to obscure the simple interests of power. In order to secure national unity at home and European allies abroad, and thus prepare herself for the hard task of struggling against Spain, French realistic policy was obliged to proclaim a policy of 'live and let live' in respect of the various creeds; France herself could reasonably expect that the Pope of the time, Urban VIII, who was jealous of Spain, would take up an understanding attitude in this matter. It was the hope of the author, that France would be able to mediate between Pope and Protestants in such a way that the Catholics in the Valtelline would be given that very same security to carry on their religion that the Protestants wanted for themselves and had so long pined for. Accordingly he treated the Papacy too merely as a factor in the politics of Italy and of Europe in general; and with a cool matter-of-factness he inspected the political consequences of its ecclesiastical authority. For him (as for so many of his contemporaries) the word 'Christendom' has become watered down into a conventional expression for the sphere of Catholic and Germanic States; the only effective remnant it contains of the old doctrine of the *respublica Christiana* is that Turkey is excluded from the denotation. Yet this may also have something to do with the fact that the relationships in East Europe were less well known to him, and for the moment also interested him less.

It was not long before this instructive experiment by an unknown precursor of Richelieu's policy received added strength from a personality on whom history throws much light. This is one of the most significant men in France at that time; his remarkable political development not only increases the fascination of the pamphlet, but allows us to enter much more deeply into the contemporary statecraft and conception of history.

(2) DUKE HENRI DE ROHAN

There is a peculiar virtue in the political writings of important statesmen in which they describe the experiences of their political life. The ordinary political writer, however well trained he may be in politics and history, however energetically he may try to influence affairs (or, indeed, even

succeed in influencing them), is nevertheless always bound to stand a little apart from events without ever actually taking part in them. His political perceptions will necessarily lack a certain final element, a certain strength, such as can only be present when the political reflections are permeated by the sum of an individual's personal experiences, gained in the course of responsible action, and by an individual's memory of his own painful endeavours and struggles. The historian or political writer may often comprehend the relationships more widely and deeply than the statesman who, though he has been trained in the school of personal action, also suffers from the limitations of personal action. But the former will never be capable of giving his ideas the brazen ring of a statesman's personal experience. This brazen sound echoes from Caesar's Commentaries right up to Bismarck's *Thoughts and Recollections*. If these are compared with the political writings of even such a powerful mind as Heinrich von Treitschke, it will perhaps be clearer what we mean.

One feels somewhat the same (though the instance is not, indeed, quite so remarkable), when one passes from the *Discours* of the anonymous gifted author of 1624 to the work of Duke Henri de Rohan, *De l'interest des Princes et Estats de la Chrestienté*, which appeared in Paris in the year 1638. De Rohan had previously been an antagonist of Richelieu's, when he commanded the rebel Huguenots up to the time of their overthrow after the fall of La Rochelle in 1629; but he had then become a supporter of Richelieu's policy in the struggles for the Grisons and the Valtelline. He may be numbered among the strongest political personalities in France during the seventeenth century, though he was indeed one of those people who do not become all that they are capable of becoming, for the reason that he almost always felt obliged to fight on the losing side, and usually for the sake of a lost cause. Such a man as this, who, in the course of a wildly tempestuous and harassed life, still avoided becoming a mere adventurer, and on the contrary conducted himself strongmindedly with severe self-restraint right up to the very last moment when he died in battle, was certainly well fitted to imbue the political ideas which he inscribed in his book with that very life-blood of which we were speaking. Right from the outset one is forced to consider the question of the relationship between his constantly changing political life and his book. But we shall not be in possession of the material necessary for answering this question until after we have first investigated the thought-content of the book and its significance for our own principal problem. We will begin with a few external details concerning the origin of the work.

After the Peace of Alais in 1629, which secured the capitulation of the last Huguenots still fighting in the south of France, Richelieu sent the Duke de Rohan to Venice, in order to give this dangerous man some

occupation outside France. And there Rohan was soon able to make himself useful both to Richelieu and to France; because in the struggle against Spain, which was now inaugurated by the War of the Mantuan Succession, the Huguenots too could now be used to further his political aims and to fill out the collective front of the nation. In 1630 Rohan entered the service of Venice as a *condottiere*; but he found there was so little for him to do there in the way of military affairs, that he was able to occupy his leisure with all kinds of literary work. His Memoirs, dealing with the events from 1610 to 1629, and his work on military science entitled *Le Parfait Capitaine* appeared during the following years; and perhaps isolated parts also of the discourses appended to the *Interest* originated as far back as the time from 1631 to 1632.[1] In the meantime, after the Peace of Cherasco between France and Spain, Rohan was ordered by Richelieu in the autumn of 1631 to go to the Grisons, where he was chosen as general of the three Confederations. But here too he aroused the suspicion of Richelieu, who never entirely trusted the ambition of his former antagonist; at the beginning of 1633 he had to return once more to Venice, but from there he immediately went back again on his own authority to the Grisons and to Switzerland.[2] He passed some time in Baden, Zurich and Chur, and received fresh military and political instructions from Richelieu, the aim of which was to hinder the designs of Spain in those countries; but he himself was pressing for even stronger belligerent decisions to be taken against Spain, and he did succeed in getting Richelieu to let him come to Paris in 1634 for a more intimate discussion. From June to October 1634, he lingered at the Court and in Paris, received amicably enough to begin with, but afterwards kept in suspense and slighted by Richelieu. But there occurred at this time the overwhelming Swedish defeat at Nördlingen (5th and 6th September 1634), which finally clinched Richelieu's long-delayed decision to take up the struggle against Spain on the grand scale. Then, in the war which broke out in 1635, Rohan, as commander of the French army in the Grisons and the Valtelline, found a wide scope for glorious achievements on behalf of his fatherland. But in the end his old misfortune dogged him again even here. He received inadequate financial support from the Court and failed to gain the fruits of his victories, and this earned for him fresh dislike and mistrust on the part of Richelieu. In order to avoid imminent arrest, he finally entered the army of Bernhard of Weimar, and when fighting as

[1] Bühring, *Venedig, Gustav Adolf und Rohan*, p. 221, A. 1.

[2] Laugel, *H. de Rohan* (1889), p. 306. Cf. also, regarding Rohan's life after 1629, the thesis of Mention, *De duce Rohanio post pacem apud Alesium usque ad Mortem* (1883); Pieth, *Die Feldzüge des Herzogs Rohan im Veltlin und in Graubünden* (1905), and most of all Rott, *Rohan et Richelieu*, *Rev. d'hist. diplomat.*, 27 (1913). Rohan's activities in the Grisons have been treated more fully by Rott in his *Hist. de la représentation diplom. de la France auprés des cantons suisses*, vol. 4 and 5 (1913).

an ordinary soldier at Rheinfelden in 1638, he received the fatal wound from which he died on 13th April of that year.

His *Interest* probably only appeared in 1638 after his death. It is dedicated to the Cardinal; and (according to the statement of Petitot, in his introduction to the Rohan Memoirs) a manuscript copy of the book in the former Royal Library in Paris has the date 'Paris, 1st August 1634', after the written dedication.[1] It is doubtless true that, during those weeks when he had to wait impatiently for Richelieu's decision, Rohan wanted to influence him by means of the book, to establish himself as a man who could be trusted, and at the same time incite the Cardinal. But whether it was first written at this time has already been doubted by Laugel, Rohan's biographer (who is not indeed very critical in other respects).[2] The sixth of the seven discourses which are appended to the main body of the book and which (as we shall see) were probably envisaged in the plan of the book from the outset, must have been written in the year 1633; [3] other parts of the discourses perhaps originated (as we already noticed) as much as one or even two years earlier. Those years had provided him with enough leisure for him to be able to say in the dedication that he had 'not wanted to be leisurely, even with ample leisure'. But it may still only have been during the weeks of his stay in Paris that the final arrangement was given to them.

Like the author of the *Discours*, Rohan was writing on the eve of great decisions of France policy, and wished to hasten these on. The ideas in both books are dominated by this sense of what was to come. There is the wish to study Europe, before intervening in European affairs. At the same time, in the course of his own political life Rohan had undergone such profound metamorphoses that he was able to inscribe the opening words of his dedication to Richelieu with a deeply personal feeling.

'There is nothing so difficult as the art of ruling (*savoir regner*), and

[1] Petitot, *Collection des mèmoires*, etc., 2nd series, 18, 65. From this, together with another manuscript found amongst Ranke's papers, Wiedemann (in the *Histor. Zeitschrift*, 66, 498) fixed the date of origin, but he gives the actual date as 5th August 1634.

[2] Laugel, 315. But Laugel incidentally confuses Rohan's work with one of the later imitations of him, the *Interets et maximes des Princes et des Estats souverains*, 1666, and quotes remarks from the preface to this as remarks made by Rohan himself.

[3] Discourse on the choice of the Elector Palatine as King of Bohemia (p. 109 f.). It says here that the war in Germany had begun fourteen years earlier, and is still not finished. Since he counts the war as beginning with the choice of the Bohemian King, this brings one to the year 1633. Petitot concludes that during this year Rohan was too dissatisfied with Richelieu to be in any mood to sing his praises; but as regards the book itself, which was perhaps written some considerable time before the dedication, and in which Richelieu's name is not mentioned, this is by no means valid.

the most experienced in this profession have at their death confessed that they were only novices. The reason for this is that one cannot lay down hard and fast rules for the government of States. Whatever it is that causes the cyclical revolutions of the things of this world, also causes an alteration in the basic principles of good government. For this reason, those who allow themselves to be guided more by the examples of the past than by sound reasons of the present, are bound to make considerable mistakes.'

When Machiavelli, earlier on, had pointed out the path to power for those who sought to acquire or create for themselves a new kingdom, he had emphasized quite different principles. 'Men almost always follow paths which have been trodden out by others before them, and in their actions they proceed by imitation.' They can indeed never quite succeed in keeping to the paths of others, nor can they arrive at the *virtù* of those whom they are imitating; but they do well to follow the paths trodden out by great men, in that their own strength, even if it does not quite come up to that of their predecessors, will still at least derive therefrom a certain aura. Hence his teaching begins by taking the great examples of Moses, Cyrus, Romulus and Theseus. He both thought and acted in this way, first of all because he believed in the eternal recurrence, in the everlasting repetition of events in historical life, and moreover because he was under the spell of antiquity and liked to make comparisons between his own smaller period and that former greatness. His gifted empirical sense was thoroughly capable of taking him beyond these limitations of his theory; but he never quite laid aside the classicism of the Renaissance. Even the political thinkers of the end of the sixteenth century had not yet succeeded in freeing themselves from it. Bodinus mingled together numbers of ancient and modern examples, quite indiscriminately and without any historical distinction. Botero explained that the richest source of political wisdom was not personal experience, which was always bound to be limited, not even the information given by contemporaries, but on the contrary historians.[1] 'For they embrace the whole life of the world.' Even Hugo Grotius, in his guide to the study of politics which he wrote in 1615, for the most part recommended ancient authors; [2] and in his book on the law of nations he only makes use of examples from antiquity. When one reads Rohan, it is as if one were stepping over from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. The principle of pure empiricism has triumphed, and there is a fundamental rejection of the old tendency to follow famous examples and cling on to the past. He accords importance only to the fresh spring of life around him, constantly gushing anew.

[1] *Della ragion di stato*, Bk. II, *Della Historia.*

[2] *Epistola de studio politico*, printed together with Gabriel Naudé's *Bibliographia politica*, 1642.

This is partly an expression too of his own personal aptitude and personal mode of education. He was never one for book-learning; he had learnt Latin reluctantly and badly, and he considered it unnecessary for the education of a great man. In conversation he mentioned history, geography and mathematics as constituting the true science of a ruler.[1] But the change-over to pure empiricism, which was destined gradually to take possession of every province of life, was already latent in the spirit of the time, and was capable of breaking into the sphere of politics at the slightest provocation. And with political empiricism there also grew up a stronger feeling for what was individual and singular in political life. 'There are none more dangerous for the State,' said Richelieu in his Political Testament,[2] 'than those who wish to rule the kingdom according to the principles which they have got from their books. By this means they often ruin it completely, because the past bears no relation to the present, and because the relative disposition of times, places and people, is quite different.'

Thus from the very outset the same tendency is visible in the ideas of both Richelieu and Rohan. It would have been astonishing if the immediate spectacle of Richelieu's statecraft had not also had its effect on Rohan. 'In this whole treatise', he says with subtle flattery, 'you are the sole subject of discussion, although no reference to *you* is ever made.' Richelieu's political thought centred round the proposition, that in all State activity the ruling force was to be, purely and exclusively, *raison d'état*, the 'public interest', purified of all particular and private motives and of all materially egotistical constituents. If, as a statesman, he went further than others in the sixteenth century, in the matter of paving the way for a universal cultural policy which would not be limited to the ecclesiastical sphere, yet he did nevertheless limit it in a strictly utilitarian manner to what would be directly useful for the State and would bring it prestige and power. He did not hesitate to restrict even the personal freedom of movement of the monarch. He warned him to make decisions in accordance with personal favour and good humour, and reminded him of his responsibility before God.[3] Hence for him even the King was subject to the imperative necessity of State; and in the last resort it would not really be the given personality of the King that occupied the throne, but the 'Goddess Reason'—not the eighteenth-century Reason that wanted to lord it even over the State, but rather the Reason which was immanent in the State itself. Indeed, according to him, this Reason is at the same time also an emanation of that universal Reason that guides the entire world; but for him it expresses itself without any kind of theoretical sophistry and merely in

[1] (Fauvelet du Toc), *Histoire de Henry Duc de Rohan*, Paris, 1666, p. 11 f. Cf. also Sainte-Beuve's essay on Rohan in the *Causeries de lundi*, 12, 248.

[2] 3rd edition of 1688 (ch. 8, section 2), 1, 242. [3] *Loc. cit.*, 2, 49 f.

the direct concrete needs shown by States for power, authority and inner solidity, and in its service all selfish impulses have to be suppressed. It is an idea, which is at the same time basically and vitally felt, and yet also carried through with an iron logical consistency, indeed almost mechanically; it is in the highest degree universal, constant and abstract as a principle, and yet also in the highest degree individual, adaptable and concrete in the individual cases of State activity. Once it succeeds there to a position of leadership, the business of government becomes completely rationalized and determined. The statesman loses the freedom of arbitrary personal action. He becomes a soldier in the service of the idea.[1]

Rohan too had, in a sublime manner, used this very conception as a basis for his investigation. '*Nations are governed by princes, and princes are governed by interest.*' So runs the imposing preamble of the original text. Knowledge (*la connaissance*) of what concerned this interest was raised as high above mere knowledge of the actions of rulers, as the rulers themselves were raised above the peoples. 'The ruler may deceive himself, his adviser may become corrupt, but interest itself can never be at fault (*manquer*); according as it is understood well or badly, States may live or die.' But the goal of interest was always the growth, or at the very least the maintenance, of the State. For this reason it must necessarily change with the times. Therefore, in order to discern what was in the interest of a present-day ruler, it was unnecessary to delve far back into the past, but rather this interest needed to be conceived from the point of view of the present.

There are sentences here which will make even the modern reader's heart beat fast. One is faced with the spectacle of a man who has hit upon the supreme task of all historical speculation—namely the task of linking the timeless element (which is valid for all periods) together with that other element of what is changeable and necessarily determined by its own particular historical period, of linking together in one the element which *is* and the element which *is coming to be* in the historical world—and who thus succeeds in penetrating (if only by presentiment) as far as the ultimate mysteries; and all this moreover is carried out by a man who considered it superfluous to occupy oneself with the historical past, and who for that reason pointed the way all the more towards the consideration of true philosophy of history in itself. Boccalini had already declared that interest was the tyrant of tyrants, and Bonaventura that *ragione di stato* ruled the ruler, and Rohan, during his stay in Venice, must certainly have got to know the political literature of the Italians. But the doctrines, which he drew from this literature, were made more profound by his own personal experience, and thus acquired the character of an intuitive knowledge, which revealed the juxtaposi-

[1] Cf. also Mommsen, *Richelieu als Staatsmann*, *Hist. Zeitschr.*, 127.

tion in State activity of permanent absolute form alongside changing relative content. His words exhale the passionate feeling of the statesman, who sees with equal clarity both the high fixed guiding star of conduct and the changeability of winds and currents. This tension between the fixed and the changeable gave rise then in Rohan and Richelieu (as it also did in Machiavelli before) to the sublimity of statesmanlike thought, just as it would give rise later to the sublimity of historical thought.

Historical knowledge at this time, loaded down as it was with masses of material inherited from tradition and with old-fashioned concepts, could not have assisted him in any way towards the clear-as-day comprehension of the present state of Europe, which he sought. The fact that he only wished to consider the body of States composing 'Christendom', can be explained on the same grounds as in the case of the author of the *Discours* of 1624. No trace is visible now of any kind of after-effect of the idea of the *corpus Christianum*. This idea had disappeared from the duality between spiritual and mundane authority—which moreover would now cease to remain a duality, but was rather becoming welded together into the strongest possible inner unity, by means of the conception that spiritual and mundane authority belonged together just as closely and inseparably as did soul and body. This was only possible if the further idea was linked together with it, that all conflict against each other among the leading powers was reprehensible, and that on the contrary it was only permissible for these powers to rival each other in trying to re-establish the *pax* in Christendom. The picture of Christendom, which Rohan has before his eyes, is of course also dualistic. 'One must start from the assumption that there are in Christendom two powers—as it were, the two poles from which the influences to peace and war descend on other States—namely, the Houses of France and Spain.' Spain is fighting in order that the sun of a new monarchy should rise in the west. France must immediately seek to form a counterpoise against this. The other rulers have allied themselves now with one, now with the other power, according to their interest. But according as this interest was followed well or badly, it had a tendency to cause the ruin of one power, or the greatness of the other.

According to this interpretation, a complete unity which would overcome this duality, and the establishing of a conclusive peace in Europe, could only be made possible eventually by an unfavourable outcome of this struggle and by the setting up of the Spanish universal monarchy. The fact that a one-sided victory for France might also be possible may certainly have been present in his unspoken thoughts and in the thoughts of other French advocates of the doctrine of the balance of power, but they had to be careful not to express it. In the state of the

power relationships at that time, they could only allow themselves (not only in the immediate present, but as far as was discernible into the future) to aim at achieving a state of equilibrium between the two power groups, which would not ensure either lasting war or lasting peace, but would alternate precariously between war and peace. And this was clearly Rohan's opinion too concerning the probable configuration of the future.

As regards the execution of his plan to ascertain the interests of all the rulers and States, the fact is that this was subject (just as we already noticed in the case of the author of the *Discours*) to the law which governs every theoretical investigation undertaken for practical reasons. The practical motive constitutes at the same time both the means to knowledge, and the limitation of knowledge. Rohan's entire book, however coolly and factually it attempts to discern the true and real interests of individual States, is nevertheless impregnated with the particular interests of France; and for this reason the interpretation even of all the non-French interests is tinged with French prejudice. His descriptions are thus incapable of complete objectivity. And as a result of the fact that he was conscious of himself as an executive statesman and wished to provide his readers with material for political action, he did not enter so deeply into the question of the structure and the peculiar nature of the individual State as the author of the *Discours* had done; on the contrary he contented himself for the most part with noting the characteristic qualities of those principal motives which were immediately visible in the play of high policy. It was also partly due to this that he was fundamentally incapable of distinguishing between the real individual interests of particular States and the technical means used for advocating them. Even if these methods were capable of taking on an individual character in the actual practice of different States, yet they were also capable of being utilized by any other State; consequently a discussion of these methods more properly belonged to a treatise of general statecraft and diplomatic technique. On the other hand, the real 'interests' of the various separate States are characterized too crudely, in a manner which is too general and not sufficiently individual. All that he has to say about them, in essence, amounts to a somewhat monotonous repetition, either of acquisition of power, or of maintaining freedom. Retribution overtakes him here for being too little interested in the internal structure of the various separate States. The primacy of foreign policy over domestic policy (that basic perception of modern historical knowledge) has certainly been grasped by him—but grasped with too primitive a naïvety. In short, the work is more significant on account of its main basic ideas and intentions, than for the way in which these are carried out and applied in concrete instances.

Nevertheless it is worth while considering them separately too, and

evaluating the many different possibilities they contain for more subtle historical perception.

Spain is dealt with first; and, as could not fail to happen, Rohan returned to the political system of Philip II. In doing so, he showed a fortunate historical instinct in demonstrating a connection between Philip's personal capabilities and the more universal and universally valid elements which he created. Philip II knew that he personally was less suited for war than for negotiation; and this led him to take the view that the monarchies which had been brought together by great warlords were less permanent than those which were founded on well-organized counsel and good principles. For the great conquerors were not usually succeeded by heirs who were equally forceful; and, if once the conquered nations found themselves free from the yoke of their original conqueror, they immediately strove to change their situation. Thus Rohan recognized the instability of a purely military policy of expansion, and recognized further that the Spanish power-policy was founded on a firm internal interrelation of rational principles. The first and most important of these principles he took to be the utilization of the Catholic religion. Spain had strongly impressed on the Pope that the might of Spain was indispensable to Papal authority, and had even impressed it on the Italian rulers, that Spain guaranteed their religion and protected Italy from the polluting influence of foreign invasions. In France the King was urged on to suppress the Protestants, while at the same time the Protestants were secretly encouraged to engage in civil wars which would weaken the kingdom (Rohan, as we shall see later on, had plenty to say about this). With Protestant England (and here Rohan is thinking more of his own time than of Philip II) Spain certainly had to try and maintain peace, in order not to be troubled by the English at sea or in her enjoyment of the treasures of both the Indies; but, under the cloak of friendship, Spain also had to make herself protector of all Catholics in that country, and keep up educational institutions in Flanders and Spain for the Catholic youth of England. Correspondingly, in addition, Spain must support the Catholic Hapsburg Empire in Germany, and the Catholics in Switzerland, and persecute the Protestants zealously, and also try at least to create a schism in the Protestant Netherlands (where at that time Arminians and Gomarists were squabbling). Here, just as throughout the whole book, Rohan is treating religion solely as a factor of *raison d'état*, in a purely utilitarian and Machiavellian manner. This raises the question of how he was able to reconcile this with that other interest (which moved him personally far more than any of the State interests)—namely, with his vital Protestant convictions. At this point we wish only to pose the question, without answering it yet.

All the remaining Spanish interests, which he proceeds to cite, belong

in the category of the technical methods of the diplomacy and statecraft of the time—a statecraft which continually found itself obliged to supplement the inadequacy of its physical power-methods by all kinds of little tricks and manœuvres. It should be noted that Rohan did not begin with the first and fundamental method of all statecraft, namely the display of military power; on the contrary, he only included this in the series of other methods, used by Spain in a masterly manner, such as the cultivation of secret intelligence work in the foreign countries through the agency of monks and preachers, the suborning of foreign ministers, patiently carrying on secret negotiations to camouflage projected attacks, meddlesome interference as an arbitrator in the quarrels between foreign rulers, but most particularly of all the fostering of Spain's own prestige. Rohan's remarks on this point are of special interest, for 'prestige' was an important method of contemporary statecraft, and a means that had almost become an end-in-itself for political ambition. The slightest loss in prestige, Richelieu remarks in his Political Testament,[1] can have the effect that a great ruler has nothing more to lose. The Spaniards, says one of the Venetian Relations in 1620, had then pushed their enmity against the Republic of Venice to such a point that they even wanted to injure her reputation, *parte cosi essentiale, che fondamento resta di tutte l'altre.*[2] This jealous love of one's own prestige is not to be explained merely by the Renaissance tendency towards conceiving political power in terms of what was ostentatious; it is to be explained rather as chiefly due to the instinctive need for concealing the State's shortcomings in real strength by means of a dazzling appearance. For Richelieu, prestige did not mean only outward aspect; it also meant success in gaining sympathy and confidence.[3] And by no means infrequently the word 'prestige' was used to

[1] 1, 62.

[2] Fiedler, *Relationen der Botschafter Venedigs über Deutschland und Österreich im 17. Jahrhundert*, 1, 120. Another Venetian, Foscarini, says: *La riputazione ha alcune volte l'istesso effetto che la realità* (Barozzi and Berchet, *Relationi*, etc., II, 3, 434). Also the unpublished Rostock Dissertation by Anne Maria v. Schleinitz, 1921, *Staatsauffassung und Menschendarstellung der Venetianer in den Relazionen des 17. Jahrhunderts*, p. 79. *Riputatione*, which was already prized by Machiavelli (Princ., ch. 21), naturally also plays an important role with the Italian theorists of *ragione di stato*. Botero treated it in Book 2 of his *Ragion di stato*; and when he was asked to give a longer exposition of this theme, which no one had so far treated in a systematic manner, he wrote in 1598 the characteristic discourse in two books, entitled *Della Riputazione del Prencipe* (*Aggiunte fatte da G. Botero Benese alla sua ragion di stato*, Venice, 1606, pp. 77 ff.). Ammirato treated the theme in Book 5, ch. 8, and Book 13, ch. 1, of his discourse on Tacitus, Frachetta several times in his *Prencipe* of 1599 and the *Discorsi di stato e di guerra*; 1600. Boccalini also satirized in a witty manner the pre-eminence of *riputazione* over *forza* (*Ragguagli di Parnaso*, re-published 1912, 2, 84 ff.). One also finds the subject dealt with by the German imitators of the Italians; cf., for instance, Chr. Besold's *Politicorum libri duo*, 1618, p. 707 f.

[3] W. Mommsen, *loc. cit.*, p. 215 f.

denote the method (which was already used at that time) of winning over and suborning public opinion in the world by means of adducing ostensibly moral and idealistic motives for one's own power-policy. According to Rohan's arguments, the prestige of Spain really rested on the fact that she concealed her plans under a cloak of piety and of great zeal for upholding the Catholic religion; thus 'the nation is continuously held in wondrous respect'. 'This respect', he continues, 'is clearly an empty thing, but it produces solid results; and though all rulers make it an important principle to foster their prestige with care, yet Spain is obliged to do so all the more jealously, seeing how much her plans exceed those of other States.'

Rohan's insight did not penetrate like Campanella's did in those years to the complete weakness of the unwieldiness of Spain as a great power, to the disparity between her European tasks and her economic strength, indeed to the excessive overstraining in general of the resources of her population. The period was not yet educated up to the point of examining such correlations, but it was already capable of sensing and expressing the results of these connections with an acute instinct. Rohan's concluding words on the subject of Spain show that he was well aware of the Hippocratic aspect of that country. With secret satisfaction he wrote: 'This great machine, composed of so many different parts and, as it were, hampered by its own weight, is set in motion by these secret motive springs, which lose their force however in proportion as one reveals them.'

But France's interest and her task were, he continued, already laid down for her by Nature. Her geographical situation, between the Alps, the Pyrenees and the two seas, made her into a dam to prevent Europe being flooded by the Spanish mountain-torrent. France must therefore (as Henry IV had been the first to recognize completely) oppose the principles of Spain in every way. She must make the Pope understand that, if Spain were to attain her aim of universal monarchy,[1] he would be reduced to a mere servant of Spain, and that his authority, if it were to develop properly, required that a state of equilibrium should exist between the Christian rulers and States.[2] She must tell the Protestants that, though she might indeed want their 'conversion', she did not want their 'destruction', and that she was ready to help them against their enemies. In order to counter the secret burrowing tactics of Spain, France herself ought not to be sparing with money, spies or pensionaries. Where Spain attempted to achieve results by negotiations, France ought

[1] He does not use the expression 'universal monarchy', but speaks of Spain's *dessein à la monarchie*.

[2] 'It was in fact the policy of the Roman court to adopt the role of intermediary between the two great Catholic powers, neither of which would then be capable of coercing it.' Ranke, *Französische Geschichte*, 2 ², 31.

on her side to take part too in the negotiations, and should choose as her representatives men of phlegmatic character, who would be unaffected by the typical French impatience. In this high value which he set on diplomatic negotiation, Rohan once again found himself in full agreement with Richelieu. It is worth while, says the latter in his Political Testament,[1] to negotiate continuously, either in public or in secret, even when one does not look for immediate results from it. Some seed will take longer than other seed to spring up. At the very least, it helps one to understand what is going on in the world.—When Spain increases her armament, Rohan continues, France must oppose her by increasing her own armament with some strength. By means of all these methods then the prestige of Spain will decline and that of France will rise, and the other Christian powers will find hope and courage to assert themselves against Spanish oppression.

This is all that he has to say about French interests. Not one word escapes him about the real positive aims of French power-policy, concerning the need above all for better frontiers. In this text of his, which was intended for publication, Rohan safeguarded these interests of France by the very fact of not expressing them. He mentions only the paths to power, and not the aims of power itself.

When it came to presenting the interests of Italy, he was able to speak more freely and judge more objectively. Here too he was able to work over the old political material which was handed down to him, the ideas of Machiavelli and the Venetian politicians with whom he was personally familiar having breathed the same air. In this connection it was of prime importance that he (like the author of the *Discours* before him) was acquainted not only with the special interests of the various Italian States, but also reached beyond these to a collective Italian interest of the whole of non-Spanish Italy. It is extraordinary to think that the Italian idea was still alive, even in this period of oppression and dispersal. Their aim could be no other than to wish that all foreign powers were out of Italy and on the other side of any mountains, so that they could make for themselves again, if not indeed a national political unity, then at least a small system of States, where even the smaller rulers could dwell peacefully in the shadow of the greater ones, and the greater rulers could keep each other in a state of equilibrium. This was how Rohan expressed it; but in doing so he was very careful not to recall the violent attacks which had once been made on Italian freedom on the occasion of the conquering invasions of Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I. Now that Spain had once placed her foot upon Italy, the true interest of all Italian rulers could only consist in keeping open at least one avenue of escape from the oppression which they were bound to fear from so strong a power; and in no quarter could they look for

[1] 2, 34 ff.

this help with such certainty as from France. With great insight, however, Rohan asserted that there was yet a second general interest possessed in common by all the Italian States: namely, that of keeping the peace amongst themselves, because every war they fought against each other would immediately lead to interference by France and Spain, either in the form of entering the war or of acting as arbitrator. Here he is describing the typical statecraft of the weaker powers, one in which Venice chiefly excelled. And since Venice was the most important power in Italy after Spain, so she was also the first to lay down and painfully carry out these rules for her self-preservation. Venice chose to take, as he brilliantly says, the general interest of Italy for her own particular interest; and, as we may add in the sense he intends, she was obliged to make this choice. The other special interests of Venice are only treated cursorily by Rohan, whereas much more might have been said about the territorial and maritime contrasts between Venice and the Austrian Hapsburgs. The fact that Venice was obliged to foster carefully her relations with the Turks, he noted briefly. In addition, however, he observed that another special interest of Venice lay in fomenting the wars of other nations abroad by means of money—with the result (as he correctly thought) that Venice herself would be spared war. It was his opinion that the other rulers of Italy too would try and behave like this, if only they had the power and the audacity for such a policy. Venice was trying moreover to prevent Spain and the Pope from expanding in Italy, and made use of the other Italian rulers whenever possible. It would certainly be impossible to have a more subtle and concise presentation of the nature of Venetian policy in which the special interests of Venice were so curiously interwoven with those of the whole of Italy.

Rohan then went on to treat the special interests of Rome and Savoy. His somewhat vague conception of the interests of Rome was equally characteristic of the author and of the period. Her position as a universal power is scarcely contested, but the territorial interests of the Papal State are emphasized. It is more the Papacy of the Renaissance than of the Counter-Reformation that is described in this picture. But the Papacy of Urban VIII—of whom Ranke said that he 'looked on himself principally as temporal ruler'—might easily call forth such a description. Once again this picture shows some characteristic traits in the statecraft of the weaker powers, who, with the power-means at their disposal, had to maintain themselves and mistrustfully and prudently steer a middle course amongst the great powers. For example, Rome ought not to make too frequent use of the ban of excommunication, with which it terrified rulers, or else it would become useless; and Savoy, although her territorial possessions were more seriously threatened by Spain than those of any other Italian State, ought nevertheless to cultivate the dangerous friendship of Spain, so long as Savoy herself

had to be on her guard against France. It was also permissible for Savoy not to be over-scrupulous in the matter of keeping treaties in respect of both Spain and France.

Thus he suggests on one occasion here that the smaller States have good reason to fear not only Spain, but also France. It is no longer a question of this when he comes to treat the interests of Germany. Although, he sketches in the German interests with much cruder strokes than he used for Italy. And in the last resort, what more could a foreigner at that time, a Frenchman and a Protestant, find to say on the subject of German interests, than that they were now concentrated (and had been for a long time) on defending freedom against the imperial ambition of the Hapsburgs, and that religious differences must necessarily retreat before this common fundamental interest of all German rulers? At the same time he gave the Protestant rulers to understand that not only ought they to remain united and closely bound together amongst themselves, but they ought also to keep in close touch with countries abroad, in order to balance the Catholic League. And since the freedom of Denmark and Sweden would also be in danger if German liberty was destroyed, therefore the German rulers ought also to remain closely allied with these powers—and especially with Sweden, for reasons of gratitude, for having snatched them out of the abyss of slavery.

When he came to Switzerland and the Netherlands, he was once more able to give an individual and colourful description. These are two republics which have been sloughed off by Germany; and they are of considerable significance amongst the other powers, as much for the strength of their populations as for the peculiar situations they occupy. They are, as it were, the two arms of Germany. In both countries, the men and the natural surroundings are suited to one another. The Swiss seem to have been made for the mountains and the mountains for the Swiss, just as the Dutch for the sea and the sea for the Dutch. The Swiss sell to others the freedom of their bodies, and thus preserve the freedom of their country. The Dutch preserve their freedom absolutely. The interest of the Swiss is peace—that of the Dutch is to be always ready to fight. This was of course still the heroic period of the Dutch State, and no one could then suspect that one day, having sunk from its high European position, it would, like Switzerland, be content to look to peace as the guarantee of its freedom. Rohan believed that there were only two fatal causes which could ever bring about the destruction of either of these republics; an internal division through civil war or a religious cleavage. Concerning the commercial and colonial arteries of Dutch policy, he had nothing to say. In any case, these matters were of little importance for the needs of contemporary French policy, which was after all really the subject on which he was concentrating.

In the case of England, however, it was not possible even then to overlook the question of these commercial arteries. England was, so Rohan pronounced, a small world in herself, whose true interest was trade; and it was only on account of this interest that she had lately come into political contact with the other rulers. And with a trustworthy instinct he prophesied for her that, if she would continue following this true interest and apply to it the requisite means of development of sea-power and wise statecraft, she would one day become the third of the great powers of Christendom. But England had allowed herself to be thrust off the path of her true interest, of her *maximes conformes à soi-même*, since the time of the mysterious marriage between the Catholic Queen Mary and Philip II of Spain, and was falling in at this time, now with the French, and now with the Spanish interest. This was a criticism that Rohan could and must make when he compared the wavering policy of the present Stuart monarchs with Mary's blind surrender to the Catholic system of Spain. But in between there lay the great period of Elizabeth, whom he viewed as the classic representative of the English policy of interest, just as Henry IV had always appeared to him the founder of the true French policy of interest. Elizabeth made it her chief principle to suppress the exercise of the Catholic religion, seeing that this was the sole means of rendering ineffective the Catholic intrigues which were fomenting rebellion against her under this pretext. And opposition to Spain was presented to her as obligatory, for only by that means could England ever rise to a great and right position of sea-power. It followed from this that she ought to support France, give assistance to the growing freedom of the United Netherlands, and keep in close touch with the French Protestants. One notices again what stern political realism underlies all this. The element of creed appears not as an end-in-itself, but on the contrary as a means to an end. With the greatest acuteness he also brings out the purely political interest which Elizabeth had in protecting the Netherlands: in the first place England thereby succeeded in weakening an all-too-powerful neighbour, and in the second place she secured a stepping-stone towards still higher aims. He thus recapitulated very succinctly the significance of the secular interest which England had always taken in the Netherlands as a whole. And equally secular are the implications of the remark which Elizabeth is supposed to have made, and which he quotes: that England is a great animal that can never die, unless it kills itself.

If one takes stock of all this, one perceives that he was able to characterize most acutely the interests of all those powers which had already long been carrying out a deliberate policy of power and realism: namely the really great powers on the one hand, and on the other hand the small Italian States well versed in statecraft. Western and Southern

Europe, being more politically mature and subtly developed, offered the political mind more interesting material for observation than did Central and Northern Europe.

With him everything was concentrated on practical utilization, on the training and refinement of the political will. He had the happy inspiration of following up his description of the interests of the various separate States with a series of discourses which, with reference to different chapters of contemporary history, would show what constituted a good or a bad policy of interest.[1] Here one notices once again the Venetian training which his political thought had received. The Venetian Paruta, in his *Discorsi politici* (1599), had already made use of a very similar method,[2] and had for example investigated whether Hannibal had acted rightly in choosing Italy as a theatre of war, and whether the Venetians had pursued a correct policy in coming to the help of Pisa against Florence, and so forth. It is still customary even today amongst general staffs to bring exactly the same kind of application to the study of military history, which is certainly far better adapted to it than the complex web of foreign policy. In these supplementary discourses Rohan now wanted to stress above all that, in matters of State, it is not permissible to surrender oneself to unregulated whims, which tend to lead one into undertakings that are beyond one's powers; nor should one let oneself be guided by violent passions or by superstitious opinions. On the contrary, we should allow ourselves to be governed exclusively by our own individual interest, guided by reason alone. King Henry III of France, for example, came to grief because he mistook his own true interests. He should have suppressed the factions in the kingdom and, since he had no offspring, maintained good relations with the princes of the blood. On the contrary, he actually encouraged the factions, by constantly surrendering himself to one in order to suppress the others; and as for the Protestant princes of the blood, he let himself be incited by their enemies to oppose them consistently. Henry IV, however, understood quite correctly how to carry out the two quite different roles which were allotted to him one after another. To begin with he was only King of Navarre, premier prince of the blood and protector of the French Protestants, and he understood how to combine these different interests together. But as King of France he was faced with the task of

[1] 1. Discourse *Sur l'affaire de la ligue* (policies of Henry III and Henry IV); 2. Discourse *Sur la guerre de Savoye*; 3. *Discourse sur le differend survenu entre le Pape Paul V et la Republique de Venise, l'an 1605*; 4. Discourse *De la Trefve des Pais-bas avec le Roy d'Espagne*; 5. Discourse *Sur l'Affaire de la succession de Cleves et Julliers*; 6. Discourse *Sur l'Election du Comte Palatin au Royaume de Boheme*; 7. Discourse *Sur les Mouvemens survenus en Italie pour la succession des Duchez de Mantoue et de Montferrat.*

[2] Guicciardini too had done it before him. Cf. Ranke, *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber*[2], 51.

gaining new friends without losing his old ones; and he finally solved this difficulty successfully by changing his faith. On the other hand, during the regency of his widow Mary, which threw Rome and Spain into each other's arms, the true interests of France were sacrificed. '*La bigotterie est une mauvaise conseillère à qui s'en coiffe.*' The opposition between passion and interest in the conflict between Pope Paul V and Venice is followed out with great subtlety—on the one side the blustering and high-handed attitude of the Pope, and on the other the calm, flexible and tenacious policy of the republic. He gives a quite classic description of the statesmanlike greatness shown by William of Orange in the way in which he founded his new State. He was the only man (so Rohan remarks) who in this century had had the honour to found a new State—an unmistakable allusion to Machiavelli's celebrated arguments on the subject of founding new realms. But the establishing of the new State by the Prince of Orange was not judged by Rohan now according to the prescriptions formerly given by Machiavelli, but rather by special standards and presuppositions of its own. He showed the pressing historical force of the relationships with which William had to deal. William had to fashion the collective entity of the State out of the various separate parts which he was presented with; and at the same time he had to try and preserve the special character of each of these parts. He was dealing with peoples who, for hundreds of years, had thought more of their freedom than of their own lives. Hence the autonomy of the provinces and cities, hence the *liberum veto* in the States General. And, in order to remove the States from any temptation to come to an understanding with Spain, William preferred to flatter their liberties, rather than make any proposals to them for a better constitution. His son Maurice, however, did all that was required to create the necessary military foundation for the continued existence of the State.

We shall also single out Rohan's judgments about the recent phases of European politics. In the earlier period of the Thirty Years War, France prostituted her interest to the greatness of Spain. But the Spanish-Austrian partnership, spoiled by its success in the field and in European politics, took the risk of revealing its plans (which had hitherto been cloaked by the pretext of religion) and of openly assaulting the Duchy of Mantua. At this France rose up, began to follow once more her true interest by going to the help of the Duke of Mantua, and allied herself with Gustavus Adolphus. Spain, however, made the mistake of underestimating this ruler, for at her instigation the best imperial troops moved into Italy against the Duke of Mantua, and thus rendered possible the successes of Gustavus Adolphus in Germany, without thereby achieving anything in Italy itself. The ruins of this army had to be thrown back into the German theatre of war; and

Casale and Pignerol, the gates of entry into Italy, had to be left in French hands. By trying to conquer Italy without having first made certain of the conquest of Germany, they lost one as well as the other. And then Rohan followed up this verdict on Austrian-Spanish policy with a triumphant vista of the further advance to be expected from Richelieu's policy, rigidly directed and methodically carried out, step by step. The picture he gives here of the relationships certainly simplifies them a little,[1] but it does go to the heart of the great crisis in world history which he had just lived through. Hapsburg imperialism, having reached unheard-of heights of success, was brought down once more on account of the recklessness of its aims and because of wantonly underestimating those forces which still opposed it; [2] whereas France, under a leadership which was simultaneously bold and circumspect, climbed surely and certainly up its European path.

* * *

At the end of his work Rohan glorifies the French policy—even here he does not mention the name of its great master—and he praises it especially on account of the bold decision of the year 1628, to enter the Mantuan War and thus pursue the true interest of France, even although the siege of La Rochelle was still lingering on, even although England was assisting the besieged forces, and even although Spain appeared to be on the point of helping the rebel Huguenots in Languedoc. What must Rohan's feelings have been, when he put this eulogy on paper? For at that time (1628), he himself stood at the head of those very Huguenots, without whose overthrow the rise of the national French policy of Richelieu would never have been possible. More even than this, he himself had made overtures to the Spaniards and concluded an agreement with them, by which he placed himself in the service of the Spanish policy. In short, just at this moment when Richelieu was preparing to inaugurate a policy for furthering the only true and important interests of France (and this is even Rohan's opinion of the policy in his book), he—Rohan—was the most dangerous opponent of that very policy. And if one looks more closely at this agreement which was concluded in Madrid on 3rd May 1629 by his agent Clausel, then one's astonishment increases still more.[3]

[1] For the war against Mantua in 1629, Spain did not want an actual Imperial army sent, but only wanted the Spanish army reinforced with auxiliaries. It was the Emperor who decided to send a large army to Italy. Ritter, *Wallensteins Eroberungspläne gegen Venedig*, *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 93, 54; *Deutsche Geschichte 1555/1648*, 3, 419.

[2] Cf. for example the judgment of Ritter, *Deutsche Geschichte 1555/1648*, 3, 447.

[3] The agreement consists of the proposals of Rohan, formulated by Clausel, and the acceptance of them with slight alterations by Dom Jean de Billela, the first secretary of the State council of the King of Spain; and it is signed jointly by Billela

In return for annual subsidies of 300,000 ducats, Rohan undertook to maintain a body of 6,000 men; he promised further to let himself be used by the King of Spain whenever and however the latter wished, and that, in the event of him entering into negotiations for peace with the full knowledge and approval of the King, he would break off those negotiations again, if Spain should desire it. In the event, also, of him and his party becoming so strong that they would be able to form a separate State (*qu'ils puissent cantonner et faire un Estat à part*), that they would guarantee the Catholics free exercise of their religion in this State and equal rights of appointment to public offices.

Rohan's grandmother was an Albret, the great-aunt of Henry IV. He would have been the heir to Navarre and Béarn, if Henry IV had remained without issue.[1] In 1620 Béarn had been deprived of great Protestant and provincial privileges which it had hitherto enjoyed. This had started off the first armed rising of the Huguenots in 1621 under the leadership of Rohan. It is natural to suppose that, when in 1629, through his trusted confidant in Madrid, he raised the question of establishing a special Protestant State in the south of France, he was thinking of himself not only as a Protestant, but also as heir to the Albrets in Béarn. But whether he had in mind Béarn or some other territory, this constituted a blow at the vital foundations of the French nation and State, and he was thereby injuring those very interests whose absolute validity he preached in his work of 1634. Certainly one was still well-accustomed then in France, to find rebellious nobles seeking refuge with the country's enemies.[2] But the contradiction between his conduct in 1629 and his ideas in 1634 poses a psychological problem, which has perhaps also a universal political significance, and perhaps could also throw light on the development of the doctrine of *raison d'état* and of State interests. It does not seem reasonable that this stern and severe character should simply trim his sails according to the wind, and should change himself from a defeated opponent into a zealous supporter of

and Clausel with the proviso that Rohan had to ratify it, sign it and swear to keep it. It was already published in 1631 in the *Mercure françois*, XV, 455 ff. I did not have access to the reprint of the text in Le Cointe, *Recueil de pièces conc. l'hist. de Louis XIII*, II, 522 ff., or to the draft of a manuscript in the former Royal Library, mentioned by him and Petitot (in the preface to Rohan's memoirs, *Collection des mémoires*, 2nd series, 18, 55). The opinions of recent historians about the wording and content of the agreement (in addition to Laugel and Petitot, cf. also Ranke, *Französ. Geschichte*, 2^{2}, 343; La Garde, *Le duc de Rohan et les protestants sous Louis XIII* (1884), p. 296 f.; Schybergson, *Le duc de Rohan et la chute du parti protestant en France* (1880), p. 89; Lavisse, *Hist. de France*, 7, 273) differ from one another in small particulars and are not altogether exact. We keep to the text of the *Mercure françois*.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries de lundi*, 12, 249; Laugel, p. 83, and Hanotaux, *Hist. du cardinal de Richelieu*, II, 2, 440, indicate this.

[2] Avenel, *Richelieu et la monarchie absolue*, 1, 328.

Richelieu's policy. So far we have encountered three motives in his political life: Huguenot convictions, an aristocratic and dynastic ambition, and a disposition towards Richelieu's view of the State. How was it possible that these should all show themselves in one and the same mind? How were they really related to one another inside him? In order to find the answer to this, one must review his political past since the death of Henry IV.

To begin with, then, he certainly seems to have been guided exclusively by the first two motives, and indeed these two were linked together in such a way that it is not always possible to distinguish them precisely. At the political conference of the Huguenots, which took place at Saumur in 1611, and which had to decide what attitude they would adopt towards the pro-Spanish and Catholic course of action of the Regent Maria, it was Rohan and his father-in-law Sully who opposed the more peaceful tendency and made the more radical demands on their co-religionists. In the following years he went even further. Irritated that he had been refused the succession in the government of Poitou, he urged in 1615 the union of the Huguenots with the Party of the Nobles, which was led by Condé. 'Now', says Ranke,[1] 'they made common cause with an aristocratic party that wanted to dictate laws to the Queen-Regent.' It was no longer the purely religious interest that was driving Rohan. When later, after the government had been taken over by Louis XIII, the Queen-Mother herself became the head of a *fronde* faction, Rohan found it temporarily opportune to join her (even though she was of Catholic conviction through and through). His Huguenot motive was certainly operating more purely (and unmixed with any other motive) during the struggles of the next twenty years, when the Huguenots, left to rely on themselves, were fighting against the Court. His attitude then was often still redolent of the old Calvinist fighting spirit of earlier times. He had the Bible carried about before him, and declared that if there were still two people left on earth who professed the reformed religion, then he would be one of them.[2] 'If you have our prisoners put to death,' he wrote to one of his opponents in 1628, 'then I shall do the same with your prisoners, and that will be worse for them than for our people, for yours would not possess the certainty of salvation.' [3] So too, even later, in 1631, he declared with the same iron conviction, that he would rather hear the news of his daughter's death than of her marriage with a papist.[4] But how easy it was, whilst he was in opposition to the crown, for his Calvinistic feelings to change imperceptibly into the defiance of a disobedient vassal! With respect to the rising in 1625, led by him and his brother Soubise, Ranke felt himself obliged to say: 'Reverence for the

[1] *Französ. Geschichte*, 2², 195. [2] *Loc. cit.*, 257 and 289; De La Garde, p. 153.
[3] *Discours politiques du duc de Rohan*, 1646, p. 112. [4] Laugel, p. 289.

majesty of the royal name was completely lacking in them, they were only thinking of their particular party attitude.' In his personal policy, too, of entering into relations with foreign countries against the home government, he was not easily intimidated. After the assembly at Saumur in 1611 he tried through an agent to interest the King of England in the views of his party.[1] On the subject of the relationship he entered into with England in 1626, which gave rise to the third rebellion of the Huguenots, he himself said: 'I shut my eyes to every other consideration, save that of the welfare of the Church.' [2] The first political connections with Spain had already occurred in the year 1625.[3] We have already seen to what treasonable schemes they led. Even before this last climax of his political activities, the Parliament of Toulouse, on 29th January 1628, had already sentenced him, for what he had done already, to be torn apart by four horses.[4]

But what is the connecting-link (we must ask again) that leads from the Rohan of feudal ambition and Calvinistic defiance to the Rohan who preaches the doctrine of a State interest purified of all feudal and semi-Protestant elements?

Certainly anyone who reads his *Interest* with care, can detect this connecting-link in the background. In this book King Henry IV stands out for him as the classic representative of France and her true interest; and the following period that lay between Henry IV and Richelieu appeared to Rohan by contrast in the light of an aberration, a deviation from the true guiding-light, just as the policy of the Stuarts seemed a deviation from the true system of English policy represented by Elizabeth.[5] In the system of Henry IV the lines of the various interests which moved him personally met together in a synthesis that seemed to him completely ideal. Henry IV was the protector of his co-religionists both inside and outside France, the chivalrous and distinguished head of the great nobility, whose aspirations were only controlled by him so far as was demanded by the interests of having a strong kingdom; their brilliancy, on the other hand, reflected a lustre even on his own crown. And he brought France once again to a position of power and importance in Europe, by means of his wise, firm and consistent opposition to the Spanish universal monarchy. Rohan, being born in 1579, had been as it were trained up by Henry IV as a member of a young generation of Huguenots, who were able to accept Henry IV's change of faith as an accomplished fact and to come to a real understanding with him more easily than the King's old comrades-in-arms were able to do. He became

[1] *Memoires du duc de Rohan*, 2nd ed., 1646, p. 36; cf. Laugel, p. 60.
[2] De la Garde, *loc. cit.*, p. 188. [3] Ranke, *loc. cit.*, 290.
[4] De la Garde, *loc. cit.*, p. 228; cf. Rohan's *Memoires* (1646), p. 285.
[5] For similar views in contemporary public opinion, cf. Kükelhaus, *Ursprung des Plans vom ewigen Frieden*, etc., pp. 50 ff.

the King's favourite, the son-in-law of his trusted counsellor Sully. In the attempt on Jülich in 1610, that initial entry into great European politics and deployment of French power which Henry was planning, the French troops were temporarily led by Rohan. And when this action was abruptly broken off owing to the assassination of the King, Rohan wrote: 'Now I shall divide my life into two parts; the part that lies behind me I shall call happy, because it has been in the service of Henry the Great, and the part which I still have to live out I shall call unhappy, and spend it in weeping, lamenting and sighing.' [1]

It is only on the basis of this vital experience that his whole line of conduct after 1610 becomes completely intelligible. The connecting-link that held his ideals together was broken. Now they were riven asunder, now they lacked the principle that had hitherto been guiding them, now they spread rapidly off in different directions, into Huguenot and aristocratic particularisms; and yet amid all this restless and divided struggling in factions there still remained a strong and constant longing to grow together once more in union and harmony under the primacy of the great French national and State interest, as it had been represented by Henry IV. It is not necessary to demonstrate this by referring to the memoirs he wrote later, in which he lamented the fact that after 1610 the particular interests had caused the more general interests to be forgotten.[2] It was rather in the years of his struggles against the Court that he repeatedly took up his pen to write a series of *Discours*,[3] which allow us to give a true picture, untroubled by later reflections and prejudice, of his political ideas at that time, and at the same time also a true picture of the various preliminary stages and attempts he made towards his later theory of State interest.

The first of these discourses, 'On the death of Henry the Great', written not long after the event, depicts the misfortune which it had brought upon France. 'In this book I am not lamenting about my personal hopes, which have been shattered by his death; nor is my sorrow even caused by fear for the ruin of the Protestant party, for we were never in better esteem or more sought after than we are at this moment, and we are in a position to choose which of the two papist parties we should like to join with. I am lamenting the loss which France has suffered—for the State is in danger.' This danger seemed to him to lie not only in internal disorder; he saw it almost even more in the decline of French power in Europe. In the third discourse, written in 1612,[4] he says: 'Under Henry the Great we were the terror of our enemies, the refuge of our friends. Every day that has passed, since the

[1] *Discours politiques du duc de Rohan*, 1646, p. 11; cf. Laugel, p. 42.
[2] *Memoires*, p. 47.
[3] *Discours politiques du duc de Rohan*, 1646.
[4] See the indications on pp. 28 and 33.

end of his rule, has reduced our position further. Europe is taking on an entirely new appearance. Previously there was a state of equilibrium between the two powers of France and Spain. Incontrovertibly, France had all the Protestants under her protection or else on her side, and she shared with Spain the task of protecting the Catholics. They were two powers which could not tolerate one another, nor could they be united in bonds of matrimony, seeing that one was expanding and the other declining. Nevertheless the parity of these two powers had the further effect of giving security to all the other powers, who therefore acquired a great interest in it; for without this parity, the other powers would be placed in a position of dependence on the stronger of the two powers. Now we are beginning to see the great change which has taken place. The present alliance of France with Spain has opened the eyes of the allies of both countries, and especially those of France; for they now see very well that this alliance tends only towards the ruin of France, and consequently also towards their own.'

Thus he is trying, in this and the other discourses of these years, to show that it is possible for France to achieve a powerful position by protecting the Protestants, and for the Protestants to be protected by the power of France, without it being the case that the Catholics and the alliances with the smaller Catholic States should come to any harm. On account of the situation which this kingdom occupies among the other kingdoms (he declared in Saumur in 1611), the Kings of France will retain the credit of being the protectors of Europe, so long as they treat us well.[1] In our case (he says in the sixth discourse, which dates from 1617),[2] the two religions cannot succeed in ruining each other, without the State being ruined at the same time. It is in the interest of the Protestants—but also in the interest of many Catholic States—to maintain the greatness of France. The Protestant party is, on the one hand, bound by its creed to the Protestants of the whole of Christendom; on the other hand, it is the party which has produced from its midst the man who restored France.[3]

It was even then his wish that the interest of the French State should be bound firmly together, not only with the Protestant interest, but also with the aristocratic interest. If the parties of the princes and the Protestants were united (says the third discourse),[4] they would be able to restore the State, and make a clean sweep of the present *conseil des petits gens*, the pensioners of Rome and Spain. Together, the nobles and those of the reformed creed would then restore the old alliances of the crown. But while he let it be seen that his Protestant conscience possessed for him an absolute value of its own, and that it was really only a natural harmony that brought it into conformity with the

[1] P. 20. [2] P. 62.
[3] P. 34 (3rd discourse). [4] P. 36 ff.

organic interest of the State, he nevertheless subordinated his aristocratic interest to the monarchic interest, by virtue of all the liveliness with which he represented it. It is certain, he says,[1] that in every kingdom the authority of the king diminishes that of the nobles, just as any expansion on the part of the nobles weakens the royal power. This is a balance which cannot remain equal: one of the two authorities must always triumph over the other. But it is the opinion of those whose mind is well-ordered, that their greatness is identical with that of the king; and the nobles are happier and more secure under a great king, than under those small sovereigns who are afraid to make any move for fear of damaging themselves with France or Spain.

So one sees that his mind is already directed towards laying bare the springs of rational interest inherent in the movement of political forces, towards recognizing the law that governs them, and making this the guiding principle of one's own conduct. 'Eloquence', he says,[2] 'which does not touch the interests of those one wishes to convince usually has little effect on them.' Even at this time, he had already grasped one of the most important basic ideas in the *Interest*, namely that the interests of States constituted laws for their behaviour, but that the actual content of these laws differed from State to State, and that every State had its own special individual law. '*La Loy des Estats change selon les temps. On n'y peut donner de Maximes certaines. Ce qui est utile à un Roy, est dommageable à un autre.*'[3] And yet another remark of this period, which would have done honour to his later work: '*La force d'un Royaume consiste en un Roy et en ses Alliances, non de Sang, mais d'interest.*' The third discourse, '*Sur l'Estat de la France*', already contains the whole kernel of his work on the interests of rulers, in a short comparative review of the European States. They all feel some anxiety, he remarks, on the score of the Spanish-Austrian partnership, and each separate one of them has a different reason for this anxiety. 'Everyone knows how sweet freedom is, and that there is nothing a nation, which has won it, will not do in order to keep it.' Even the special weakness of Spain, in that her power is split up geographically, as against the power of France which is equally well situated both for attack and defence, is already quite plainly analysed by him here.

Amidst the wild conflict of factions during those years, and even though he himself was not unpolluted by this conflict, he yet strove towards the greater and purer task of comprehending the collective interest of France within the framework of the system of European States. The man of party and the statesman, the Huguenot and the French patriot, are ranged together side by side in him. It was at this time, in 1612, that he vigorously denied the suggestion that those of the

[1] P. 59 f. (6th discourse). [2] P. 47 (5th discourse).
[3] P. 19 (2nd discourse).

reformed creed were wanting to follow the example of the Swiss and the Dutch, and separate themselves from the State. This would contribute neither to the honour of their nation nor to their own advantage. In any case it was impossible to consider such a course, for the reason that their homes were too widely scattered over the country.[1] But nevertheless in the same discourse he makes the threat that the Huguenots, if they were driven to despair, were capable of seeking help from the King of England, and thereby bringing down ruin and civil war on France.[2] We have seen that, in the last resort, despair could in fact drive him to a similar course. But we know now that the fate which Richelieu was preparing for him in 1629 by overthrowing the Huguenots, also liberated in him forces and ideas, which had lain ready in him long since, only thwarted and troubled by the state of the times. For years now he had burnt with an ardent desire that he and his co-religionists should one day fight their way across the Alps in the service of the King.[3] It was not as a neophyte that he entered the service of Richelieu's policy after 1629 and proclaimed the inexorable doctrine of State interests, but rather as one who had long been convinced of its truth.

From the very outset, it was their common opposition to the Catholic universalism of Spain that had been the point of union between the interests (as properly understood) of the French State and the interests of the Huguenot party. And in Rohan's case the political fate of Coligny and Henry IV was to a certain extent repeated. When Coligny came to the court of Charles IX in 1572 and gained the confidence of the weak young king, he ceased to be the mere head of a party and believed that the way was now clear ahead for his real political aim, of adopting a policy for the whole French nation and a policy of expansion on a Huguenot basis. The Massacre of St. Bartholemew destroyed this significant possibility, which seemed at that time to have a good chance of succeeding. Then Henry IV had to abandon the Huguenot basis, at least for himself personally, when, from being the leader of the party, he became the monarch; but even afterwards it remained part of his political system to incorporate the Huguenot interest within the dominating interest of the French State. Rohan's paths and aims lay, as it were, halfway between those of Coligny and Henry IV. He renounced, and indeed from the outset he had been obliged to renounce, the supreme aim which Coligny had set his eyes on, of making France itself Protestant. There was no longer any question of this and, so far as one can see, he never considered it for a moment. On the other hand, fate had not required of him, as it had of Henry IV, that he should change his faith in order to be able to place his powers fully in the service of the

[1] P. 39. [2] P. 33.

[3] This in 1622, 1623 and 1625; cf. Laugel, pp. 137, 167, 177 f.

idea of the State. On the contrary, Richelieu, when to a certain extent he de-feudalized the Huguenot community by destroying their fortifications and taking away their political and military privileges, still granted them enough toleration and freedom of movement for them to be able to serve the State without any qualms of conscience. In the years following the death of Henry IV, Rohan had hoped to link together his State interest and party interest, by bringing it about that those of the reformed creed should, without laying any claim to sole mastery, still be the really effective State party in the country. This had not been possible; it had been shipwrecked by the feudal aspirations of the Huguenot party—aspirations which had been implanted in the party by the feudal privileges Henry IV had given, and by its position as a State within a State. Under the strong monarchy of Henry IV, which had correctly comprehended the interest of the French State, these feudal privileges had not so far been able to injure the State interest, on the contrary they had been able to remain in harmony with it. Amid the confusion of the Regency and the early period of Louis XIII, and during the new wrong course of European policy which they were steering, the Huguenot interest had divided off from the State interest; it reproached the latter not unjustly with being wrongly understood and badly upheld, and fell back to rely on itself. The consequence was that Rohan then upheld the feudal interest of his party all the more strongly, and allowed himself—quite on the lines of his doctrine of interest, one is tempted to say—to be 'commanded' by it. The split which thus occurred in him was not one he was capable of resolving himself. Some stronger authority had to separate one from another the various elements which had grown together in him in such a contradictory but inevitable fashion. This happened when Richelieu de-feudalized the Huguenot community. By doing so, he freed the French statesman in Rohan, and the pure philosopher of the State, from the pressure of particular party interests. Rohan may perhaps really have breathed freely at last when it was made permissible for him to be at the same time a Calvinist and a Frenchman, unrestrainedly and with equal enthusiasm. It was as if a field, which hitherto had been forced to grow weeds and good fruit alongside one another, had now been cleansed of the hidden tares.

The fall of La Rochelle marked the end of an epoch in the life of the French nation and State. The leading circles in the nation were ardently desirous that the royal power should give them unity, grandeur and glory; even those who had hitherto stood in the way of unity were longing for it too. Contemporary observers were significantly conscious of this new element that was now making its appearance. 'This is no longer', wrote one of them in 1629, 'the France of yesterday, torn, sick and feeble. A moral revolution has taken place, a change of spirit, a delightful and gratifying transition from bad to good.' Now France will

be like a well-ordered house. All will obey, from the children down to the hired servants, and the plurality of kings will give place to the sovereignty of one single king.[1]

Now we are also in a position to answer the question of how to reconcile the cold utilitarian treatment of contrasting creeds in Rohan's *Interest* with the deeply sincere feeling of his Calvinist convictions. The various complications and solutions of his own fate show us that he had always wanted to be at the same time both an advocate of State interest and an advocate of belief, and that in the end he was able to be both at once, without either disturbing the other. Having once achieved this harmony, he did not hesitate either to draw the practical consequences. During his activities in the Valtelline, he was acting on behalf of the Catholics there (on the lines of the policy of Richelieu and Father Joseph), against the wishes of his co-religionists in the Grisons.[2] It may perhaps have seemed to him like a harmony pre-established by God, that the interest of the French State and the Calvinist interest, if understood in relation to the whole, both pointed towards the same political path. But one may delve even deeper, and recall that trait in Calvinism, which has been of such infinite historical significance, a trait which was brought to light by the investigations of Max Weber and Troeltsch: namely, the element of spiritual asceticism in it, which enabled Calvinists to carry on the affairs of this world in a strictly utilitarian and rational manner and at the same time with the greatest energy, so long as they did not allow worldly affairs to captivate and mislead their conscience, and so long as they only carried on these affairs as instruments for augmenting the glory of God in the world. It thus became possible to make a purely utilitarian use in politics too of the element of creed—provided that the tacit reservation was made, that the divine glory stood high above all questions of politics—*l'empire de Dieu restant en son entier*, at it was expressed in the formula of Huguenots serving the crown [3]—and that in the last resort even every political action had to serve the glory of God. Max Weber has shown how the spirit of modern capitalism in Western Europe has been nourished by the motive forces of this intellectual and spiritual asceticism. The case of Rohan now shows that these motive forces were also capable, though not actually of producing the spirit of modern statecraft, yet at least of favouring and promoting it. There was an intimate connection in him between the age of religious conflict and the age of pure *raison d'état*.

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[1] Balzac, *Le Prince* (edition of 1661), p. 162, especially 30.

[2] Laugel, p. 309, 313, 335; Rott, *Hist. de la représent. dipl. de la France*, etc., 5, 89, 144, and *Revue d'hist. diplom.*, 27, 167.

[3] Schybergson, p. 16.

Thus Rohan's own life offers the most perfect commentary on his own doctrine of the interests of States. We see how these interests arise organically out of the state of the times, and how, by being correctly or wrongly understood, they can take the State up to the heights or into the depths; we see how they are bound to spring up even in quasi-State patterns such as the Huguenot community, and how they are then capable of intersecting and coalescing in a particular manner with the real supreme State interest; and that finally when this happens the latter (if upheld rationally and forcefully) is bound to show itself as the stronger. At this time the old French monarchy, just struggling forward out of feudalism and threatened anew by the problem of religious cleavage, was presented with a task similar to that which faces the modern constitutional State with its parties. The modern parties, too, are and (in accordance with the natural impulse inherent in them) are bound to be quasi-State organisms, whose natural interests will at one time conflict and at another time accord with the higher State interest. In both the old and the new instances, it is necessary for the higher State interest to triumph over the interests of all State-like organisms. Yet there is at the same time an essential difference between the two instances. The modern State, which is dependent on internal freedom of movement, can never quite eliminate the quasi-State character of the parties; it can never completely deaden in them the nerve of particular interest. The proper remedy for this lies in the parliamentary State, where the separate parties and party-leaders themselves take over responsibility for the whole of the State; they pass smoothly over from the *corpus* of the party to the *corpus* of the State, and (if they are cut out for it) they must then think and act from the point of view of the State, and let themselves be 'commanded' by it. It is thus possible (and in some cases it is achieved with more success, and in others with less) for the vital forces which develop within the parties to be made useful to the whole of the State. The old monarchy had to strive for the same goal by other means. In order to make the powers of a Rohan available for its own use, it had to smash utterly and completely the State-like organism to which he was attached. It was absolutely impossible for the monarchy to tolerate any kind of State within the State, any kind of special political autonomy within itself, because it was not yet strong enough to grant to the State-like organisms any increased freedom of action within its own framework, without being overcome by them in the process. The system of Henry IV, which had made it possible simultaneously to preserve the autonomous spirit of the Huguenot community and yet keep it within bounds, had nevertheless been founded only on his singular personality. Judging from the experiences of the Regency, Richelieu saw clearly that it was only by annihilating all autonomous authorities, and by breaking up all special political

interests in the country, that the interest of the central State would become capable of achieving its fullest development.

Thus the processes of internal and external development of State interest were very closely connected. In order to achieve its power-aims abroad, the State Will was obliged to find for itself richer sources of financial and military power at home—a thing which at that time could only be done by initiating an absolutist regime. This raises the question of whether Rohan had decided also to draw these consequences of his doctrine of interest, and of whether, after the Huguenot autonomy had been broken, he had also basically taken up the position of Richelieu's absolutism, thus approving his domestic policy as well as his foreign one. It is not possible to answer this question on the basis of Rohan's own observations, but certain other reasons incline us to answer it in the affirmative. The real guiding-light for Rohan's political thought had always been the system of Henry IV; and he was able to transfer to the service of Richelieu because—and we may well qualify this by adding, only so far as—the latter was restoring the system of Henry IV. But this system had not yet reached the stage of a complete development of absolutism within the State. The independent power of the nobles in it was only reduced, not broken. Its real root was that old French type of royalism, which was capable of combining an attitude of genuinely and naïvely passionate enthusiasm for a national monarch who shed a strong lustre abroad, with an attitude at the same time of factious defiance against the servants of the crown—*pour le roi, contre le cardinal*, as it came to be expressed later when the nobles were struggling against Richelieu.[1] And the limitless absolutism to which Richelieu prepared the way did in the last resort also endanger (as experience might have shown) that measure of religious tolerance which Richelieu granted the Huguenots, and by means of which he made it possible for Rohan to enter his service. These unpleasant after-effects of Richelieu's life-work were not yet visible at that time; but Rohan, by serving Richelieu now, helped to dig a grave for the Huguenot community. He believed (and at that time he was quite justified in believing) that he was serving that properly-understood *raison d'état* of France, which was bound to tolerate Protestantism at home, because her European interests required it. On the battlefields of Italy he was also wanting to fight (as has been correctly said) for the recognition of his faith. And on those same battlefields, too, the superfluous unrestricted force of the nobles was able to vent itself, and their old French type of royalism was able to operate fully. No one was capable of feeling this more strongly than Rohan, who had for so long been obliged to waste his strength in barren rebellion, only to find at last the service of the crown, which he had long desired, in political and military activities on

[1] Avenel, *Richelieu et la monarchie absolue*, I, 148 f.

behalf of the European interests of France. In his work *Le Parfait Capitaine*, a commentary on Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*, which dated from the same years as his *Interest*,[1] there are to be found some instructive observations on this subject. They do indeed border on certain frequently-expressed doctrines of the statecraft of the time, but they also bear the unmistakable colouring of individual experiences.

The powerful States (it says here),[2] which are not dependent on the help of others, are only few in number, and it is only against themselves that they have to be on their guard. But the powerful States, just like the less powerful ones, should have only good fortresses, and only a small number of these, placed on the frontiers and not in the heart of the States,[3] because it is civil war rather than invasion that they have to fear, and because no one would ever attack a great kingdom which is not in the throes of civil war. Also the government ought never to be allowed to remain permanently in one family, or for more than one man's lifetime. But the most important and powerful means of preventing civil war is to undertake a foreign war. It dispels idleness, occupies everybody (and particularly the ambitious and unruly spirits), forbids luxury, makes the people warlike, and keeps the State in such good repute amongst the neighbours that it becomes the arbitrator of all their affairs. To be sure, this principle is only valid for powerful States. For them it is a necessary one; but for small States, which have to fear all kinds of war, it is a dangerous principle, for they run the risk of becoming the prey of the more powerful States.

Lesdiguières had, in 1620, already recommended war against Spain, on the grounds that it would act as a preventive against internal civil war, and find occupation for the warlike elements of France on the plains of Italy.[4] In general, however, the idea that foreign wars provided a healthy means of occupying the energies of the rebellious elements, was a commonplace in contemporary statecraft,[5] and it deserves to be given much more consideration in any investigations into

[1] I have before me the edition of 1638, *Abbrẽgê des Guerres de Gaule des commentaires de Cesar* (Paris, Jean Houzé). An earlier edition of 1636 is mentioned by Laugel, p. 293.

[2] Pp. 363 ff.

[3] Cf. in this connection Bodinus, *De Republica*, Bk. V, ch. 6: *Quae vero imperia regionibus ac provinciis latissime patent, ut unius dominatu teneantur, nec urbes valde munitas, nec arces aedificare, praeterquam in ipsius regni finibus necesse est ut regnum et adversus hostes et contra civiles motus facilius tueri possint.*

[4] Dufayard, *Lesdiguières*, p. 527.

[5] There are countless examples from the middle of the sixteenth century in Desjardins, *Les sentiments moraux au 16. siècle*, 1887, pp. 304 ff. Also cf. Machiavelli, *Principe*, ch. 21, and Bodinus in the passage referred to above. Even Aristotle remarks in the *Politics*, V, 9, that the tyrant instituted wars, in order that the subjects should be kept occupied and feel that they needed a leader. Botero asserts in the *Ragion di stato*, Bk. 3 (edition of 1606, p. 107), that this was why Spain lived in complete tranquillity and France was continually split by civil war, because Spain kept its people occupied

the motives of wars being carried on at that time. Richelieu himself indeed did not have any intention of alleviating the internal situation by means of foreign war,[1] but even he may have welcomed its effect on internal affairs. War against foreign enemies was one of the most effective means of de-feudalizing the State, of expunging the spirit of autonomy within the State, and of gathering together the divided national forces in the service of the State interest. It was certainly true, of course, that, in any wars undertaken for such a motive, there was bound to be present a strong element of this same feudal spirit, of chivalrous ambition and eagerness to accomplish great feats. It is well known, for example, that the famous invasion of Italy by Charles VIII, which ushers in the history of modern policies of power and interest, was not undertaken at all on any grounds of pure sober *raison d'état*, but represented a chivalrous adventure in the grand style. The chivalrous motives, which played a part in the great struggles between Charles V and Francis I, are also well known. The life of the modern State itself, to begin with—one is thinking here of the connection between the modern hierarchy of authorities and the State built up around a princely court, and of the structure of the old standing armies—was to a certain extent like that of a great knight. Thus here, too, the different epochs really merge one with another, and thus the older epochs nourish with their vital sap the growth of the newer whilst they themselves are destroyed in the process.

This inner blood-relationship between the epochs does indeed also make one understand how it was possible for Rohan to belong both to the one and to the other. Nevertheless, when one reads those words in the *Parfait Capitaine* about the disposition of fortresses in the country and when at the same time one recalls the basic ideas of his *Interest*, one will always be stumbling upon these disavowals of his own previous individual conduct. Who knew better than Rohan that small fortresses inside the country were a most dangerous kind of military resource in civil war? It was as the defender of the small cities and castles of Languedoc and the Cevennes that he had won for himself military glory. To a certain extent, those words from the *Parfait Capitaine* now place a final seal of confirmation on Richelieu's act of demolishing the Huguenot strongholds which Rohan had defended. This disavowal of his former activities would almost show a lack of character, if it were not quite clearly understood that a certain lack of principle did form an essential

in great foreign wars, whilst France, being at peace with her neighbours, was at war with herself on account of the Calvinist heresy. Campanella in the Discourse on the Spanish Monarchy, ch. 20; Chiaramonti, *Della ragione di stato*, p. 371; Frachetta, *Il Prencipe*, p. 134; Chr. Besold, *Politicorum libri duo*, p. 774. For Clapmarius, cf. Hegels, *loc. cit.*, p. 54. In the *Tractatus politicus*, ch. 7, § 20, Spinoza observes that kings usually wage wars on account of the nobility, in order to have peace inside the country.

[1] W. Mommsen, *loc. cit.*, p. 228.

element in the new politics of State interest. In Machiavelli it showed as a pure ability for calculating State egoism, an ability which ought to be exercised quite rationally and undisturbed by any ethical principles or aims. It was only when one surveyed Machiavelli's personality as a whole that it was possible to discern that behind all this there lay concealed the ethical motive of the ideal of *virtù* and of a passionate Italian patriotism. The position with Rohan was very similar. The fiery advocate of French glory and grandeur had been present and alive in him from the very outset, side by side with the proud and tenacious defender of the feudal community of the Huguenots. But the policy of interest itself, which he imbibed with the spirit of his contemporaries, was a sober and rational matter of calculating the relative strengths of friend and foe. In our view, it was precisely this very element of calculation in the doctrine of interest that made it easier for him to advocate it, and thus at the same time to issue a recantation of his own past. The cool matter-of-fact manner in which he prescribed recipes against his own earlier rebelliousness was made possible by the very fact that it was a question of a purely technical problem.

This observation leads on to something else. The great idea of pure State interest, of the strict subordination of every fortuitous and instinctive impulse to the inexorable rule of *raison d'état*, may well have been thought of by Richelieu, and even by Rohan too, with a certain secret sublimity, with a spiritual enthusiasm, and as if it were a kind of gospel. But it was also possible for this doctrine, when applied to concrete reality, and to the manifold relationships of State power, to deteriorate easily into a materialistic ability for calculation, into a utilitarian technique and mechanism of the political trade. And the spirit of those times was inclined towards just such a cold and sober attitude of routine. In Machiavelli, it already disturbs the ethical feelings of the reader. At that time, certainly, the State did not yet embrace enough moral values, it was not yet broadly and deeply enough rooted in the cultural life of the nation. It was only capable of struggling forward out of feudalism by making use of the mechanical means of a well-calculated power-apparatus and a policy of interest which computed precisely one's own strength and that of foreign powers. But interwoven with this rationality there was indeed, as we have already seen, an irrational strain of feudal and chivalrous ambition and eagerness to accomplish great feats, and also (during the age of the Counter-Reformation and chiefly in Spain) all the passion and prejudice of creed. The modern State was created by kings, priests and knights (not only by the way they worked together, but also by the way they strove to separate from each other), supported by certain useful creatures and tools taken from the middle class. The fact that the incipient modern State was thus forced to comprehend within itself so many contradictions, to a cer-

tain extent impelled it (in order to protect itself against the effect of these contradictions) to adopt just this attitude of sober calculation in the way it was run, and just this mechanistic conception of its interests. If one considers in detail the political history of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, one is continually astounded by the remarkable juxtaposition of a purely Machiavellian statecraft and mode of thought, on the one hand, and obscure perplexing passions and impulses, on the other.[1]

But the triumphal progress of the policy of interest and the doctrine of interest was made easier by the mechanical character it still had at that time. There was (as we said earlier on) the same kind of pleasure in pursuing such a policy, as there is in playing a game of chess—and ultimately the same, too, as an experienced diplomat feels even today. It was able to take on a playful and sportive character. To assess correctly the secret motives and resources of all the potentates of Europe, great and small, and to manipulate them properly—what an attraction this held for strong personalities! And what a temptation too for adventurers, to try their luck today with one party and tomorrow with another. The doctrine of interest also instructed men in the nimble art of changing their views, swayed by this interest today, and that interest tomorrow. And the seventeenth century, particularly, developed a species of diplomatic mercenary, a mass of diplomats, partial or complete, of resident ministers, agents, correspondents and political writers, who were ready to be hired by any power, or to compute skilfully any interest. These circles produced a number of imitations of Rohan's work during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In so far as they are written with political talent, they reflect very instructively the alterations both in the political situation and in the political spirit of Europe. But, if one is to follow the deeper developments in the doctrine of interest, and in the doctrine of *raison d'état* which is related to it, if one is to observe the lustre which they shed on other vital provinces, and the way they were intertwined with the entire process of political and historical thought, then one must turn, not merely to these journeymen of the political trade, but chiefly to the great independent and original master-craftsmen of political thought and action. In this manner, it will be the aim of later chapters to present a chain, reaching as far as the historicism of the nineteenth century, and thus throw light on the relationship between the development of statecraft and that of the understanding of history. First, however, we may allow one more representative of the genuine *raison d'état*, this time from Richelieu's own environment, to put in a word.

[1] Stieve's essay on statecraft and the passions in the seventeenth century (in his *Abhandlungen, Vorträgen und Reden*, 1900) shows very well the part played by the passions, but under-estimates the importance of the motives of rational self-interest in the politics of that time.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GABRIEL NAUDÉ

IN our observations hitherto about Richelieu, the greatest practitioner of *raison d'état* in the seventeenth century, we have, as it were, come in a circle; we have contented ourselves with following out the way in which his statesmanlike mind illumined Campanella, the author of the *Discours* of 1624 and the Duke of Rohan, and then we observed the way in which light was reflected back from these three to fall on Richelieu's own life-work. We shall now proceed further with this, by attempting to set up a fresh mirror which not only reflects light, but also sends out light of its own; this is the book by Richelieu's contemporary, Gabriel Naudé, called *Considérations politiques sur les coups d'état*. Our justification for this is that the intellectual connections and undertones of *raison d'état* do not find such clear and complete expression in the work of executive statesmen as in the work of those who are close enough to the world of action to know it well, but at the same time stand far enough back from it to be able to reflect on the subject of its problems in a contemplative manner. It is only in exceptional instances, such as that of Frederick the Great, that action and reflection are so effectively united that our investigation is justified in lingering over them. The curious fact is, then, that Naudé, the only pure scholar out of the four contemporaries and satellites of Richelieu whom we discuss, succeeded in noting certain connections and effects exerted on the human mind by action prompted by *raison d'état*, and in bringing these out more consciously and distinctly than did any of the other three who were of a more active type.

Gabriel Naudé lived from 1600 to 1653. He began as a doctor, but in 1631 he became librarian in Rome to Cardinal Bagni who acted as a papal diplomat on many occasions, and also as a Nuntius of Urban VIII in France. Naudé remained in his service until the latter's death in 1641. In 1642, the year of Richelieu's death, he was called to Paris by the Cardinal to act as his librarian, and was afterwards placed in this position by Mazarin. He was a librarian, a collector of books and founder of libraries in the grand style; he corresponded industriously

and in beautiful Latin with the scholars of his age, and led a blameless and moderate life, for which he was praised after his death. His motto was: *Foris ut moris est, intus ut lubet.*[1] This scholarly life does not seem to have produced any special problems. The immense breadth of his reading in the political literature of his time is shown by his small but instructive *Bibliographia politica*, which first appeared in 1633. Of special interest to us, however, are the close personal relations, alternating between friendship and dispute, which he had with Campanella; [2] he obtained a number of profound glimpses into the latter's vicissitudes and, in the little book mentioned above, calls him a *vir ardentis penitus et portentosi ingenii.* It would be worth making a separate investigation, in order to follow up the various glowing sparks which Campanella tossed into France and Germany by communicating with Naudé, Scioppius and Christoph v. Forstner.[3] The stimulus must have been extraordinary—in spite of the sharp criticism which Naudé himself was capable of making during the years when he was alienated by the mixture of metaphysics and politics in Campanella.[4] In Naudé, who was the more sober character of the two, Machiavellism broke through more strongly than Campanella could approve of. We may conjecture, therefore, that Machiavelli and Campanella both acted as intellectual sponsors of the work on the subject of *coups d'état* which Naudé was induced to write by his master, Cardinal Bagni, and which he dedicated to the latter in 1639. Originally it was not intended at all for a wide public, but rather for a small circle of political specialists and connoisseurs; and for this reason (as the foreword states) only twelve copies were printed to begin with. Yet, in actual fact, a very much larger number of copies must exist from this first printing; it is supposed to have been followed by a reprint in Paris in the same year, 1639, and later on by still further editions.[5] In the seventeenth century it became the most famous manual of statecraft which was representative of the Machiavellian type. It consciously forsook the worn-out paths of the Italian literature of *ragione di stato* and the *Arcana*-literature founded by Clapmar, and was much more closely connected, not only with Machiavelli, but with Justus Lipsius,[6] Charron (*De la sagesse*, 1601)

[1] Cf. the essay which Sainte-Beuve wrote on him in 1843, in the *Portraits littéraires*, II, and the information about his life in *G. Naudaei epistolae*, 1667.

[2] Cf. on this Amabile, *Campanella ne'castelli di Napoli*, I, 437 ff., and the letters of Naudé printed in vol. 2.

[3] See Kvačala, *Protestant. gelehrte Polemik gegen Campanella*, 1909, and Blanchet, *Campanella*, 529 ff.

[4] Amabile, 2, 281.

[5] We are using the editions of 1667 (*Sur la copie de Rome*) and of 1673, which L. Dumey provided with an overbearing commentary polemically aimed at Naudé.

[6] Justus Lipsius maintained a moderate Machiavellism in his Grammar of Politics of 1589, which we mentioned earlier (p. 26). Though useful as a collection of the

and Scioppius—besides one other great influence, which did indeed become decisive, not only for the immediate theme of his book, but for his whole way of thought: Michel de Montaigne. From Montaigne he learnt something which in those times was only capable of being achieved seldom and with much difficulty: namely, to unite the knowledge of a scholar with the viewpoint of a man of the world, and to free oneself from the terrific pressure exerted on one's own thought by the models of antiquity by freely suspending one's judgment about both men and books. Certain qualities which belonged to the great free-thinker—his intellectual fearlessness and lack of illusions, his relativist scepticism, and at the same time his subtle feeling for the labyrinth of the human soul, as well as his deeper yearning to find a new firm ethical position—these are reflected too in Naudé's world of thought.

He was convinced that the concessions that Clapmar and others had made to Machiavellism, when they freed the statesman from any obligation to keep the positive law and allowed him to use methods of dissimulation, had not completely exhausted all the contingencies driving the statesman to overstep the frontiers of law and morality. Therefore he dipped once more (and this time more deeply) into the prescriptions of Machiavelli; but he nevertheless firmly maintained (as the latter had in fact done too) that the licence the statesman was given to act immorally offered no sort of justification for arbitrary caprice which was at heart unrestricted and tyrannical. From the ordinary and universal rules of State, which remained within the boundaries of law and morality, he distinguished in the first place the *maximes d'état*, which might perhaps correspond to the *ragione di stato* of the Italians and to Clapmar's *arcana imperiorum*, and then in the second place he distinguished the *coups d'état*, which he was chiefly dealing with. It was a common characteristic of them both that they infringed the common law for the sake of the *bonum commune*; but in the case of action prompted by the maxims, the explicit reasons, manifestos, declarations, etc., were produced before the action, whereas with *coups d'état* the lightning would strike before one heard the thunder rolling in the clouds. The fall of Biron under Henry IV, and of the Earl of Essex under Elizabeth, thus belonged to the 'maxims', because they were preceded by a trial: the fall of the Maréchal d'Ancre and of David Rizzio, on the other hand, belonged to the *coups d'état*. But, even if the formalities of the act were carried out before, one would still be able to call it a *coup*

material of ancient thought on *raison d'état*, our purposes do not require that it should be analysed in any detail. For this one can refer to Janet, *Hist. de la science politique*, 4th ed., I, 561 ff. There is a section there on Naudé, on p. 571. Janet's valuable work suffers from an exaggeratedly juridical treatment of political theories. The problem of *raison d'état* is not altogether clear to him, as is particularly shown by his attempt to place Richelieu in violent contrast to Machiavelli.

d'état, if it was the case that religion was particularly seriously profaned in the process. So it might be, for instance, when the Venetians, 'steeped in persistent Machiavellism', said: 'We are Venetians first, and Christians second', or if a Christian ruler were to call the Turks to his aid. But according to Naudé, even quite extraordinary actions and ones which led to far-reaching consequences, such as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the murder of the Duke of Guise, the alliance which Henry IV made with the Dutch, indeed (as he even dared to suggest) the latter's very secession to the older church, belonged to the class of *coups d'état*.

It is not necessary to criticize the logical weaknesses of this construction of a concept. What he is trying to say is, for the most part, intelligible. In no sense, certainly, did he wish to justify all these '*coups d'état*'; but he distinguished between the just and the unjust ones, between those committed by kings and those committed by tyrants, and he attempted to lay down criteria and marks of recognition for those *coups d'état* which were justified. It was permissible to use them, not for attack, but only for defence in this world of lying and cheating, in which one had to counter cunning with cunning. It had to be a question of 'necessity', or of a manifest and important public advantage accruing to the State or to the ruler; for the 'honour of the ruler, the love of one's native land, the safety of the people, will compensate for many small failings and injustices'. In addition, it was better to proceed slowly than at a gallop, and not to make use of the method too frequently. Then, one always ought to choose the gentlest and easiest methods, one ought to act like a doctor and not like a hangman, with wisdom and not with passion. The *Sacco di Roma* would have been hated less, if the churches and the clerics had been spared a little more. Finally, one ought always to behave in this matter with sympathy and regret, as when one is pulling out somebody's tooth. One should very carefully consider anything that might make the use of this method unnecessary, or at least mitigate it. In short, the ruler who is not capable of being *completely* good, ought at least to be half good. If we add to this the fact that he also declared the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (which he took to be premeditated) to be a *coup d'état* which was thoroughly justified in spite of its very dangerous consequences,[1] then we get an idea of the full measure of rational Machiavellism that was in him.

This alone would not have made him interesting from a historical point of view. For it was only on account of its sinister connection with certain truths and values of State life that Machiavellism became a vital force in history. And Naudé, too, had enough of the ruthless spirit of truth to recognize this. He did not in any way try to disguise (as even Bodin himself had done) the Machiavellian practice of his own native

[1] His only criticism was that it was not carried through in a radical enough manner.

State; on the contrary, he admitted openly that France, ever since the *coup d'état* which Charles VII had perpetrated with Joan of Arc, had only been preserved by a series of stratagems, just like a diseased body that can only be kept alive at all by the use of violent measures. Moreover he was profoundly conscious of the fearful duality which was implicit in *coups d'état*. They are like the lance of Telephos, which is capable of wounding and healing; like a sword which can be used and misused; like Diana of the Ephesians, with two faces, one of them sad and the other joyful; like the medallions of the heretics, which portray at the same time both the Pope and the Devil; they are like paintings which are simultaneously capable of showing death or life, depending on the point of view of the beholder. And what is useful one moment, can be harmful the very next.

This kind of insight rose in him to the level of that freely poised feeling for life, in which we thought we could discern the influence of Montaigne.[1] If one was to undertake a *coup d'état* (this was what he taught), then one must be completely convinced of two things. In the first place, that all kingdoms and dominions were subject to change: Paris would not always be the capital of the Kings of France, nor Rome always that of the Popes. All powers eventually decline. And in the second place, if one wished to be successful with a *coup d'état*, one ought not to think that it was necessary to stir up the whole world on that account. Great changes of this kind frequently come about without anybody thinking about them, or at least without great preparations being necessary. Archimedes managed to move the largest weights with three or four rods ingeniously connected together. So, too, the statesman can produce great political revolutions by using quite insignificant means. And in this matter one ought to follow Nature, which can cause great cedars to grow from small seeds. It is a special and highly characteristic combination of wisdom and refinement, of calmness of spirit and energetic promptitude for action, which he portrayed in a masterly manner as the specific mentality of the statesman. That basis of philosophical scepticism which is generally present in the statesman who is acting in accordance with pure *raison d'état*, but which is seldom ever expressed openly, was revealed here in a quite straightforward way.

This practical philosophy of the statesman is indeed always a dualistic philosophy, since wisdom and the need for power are not consistently in agreement. The degree of duality in the relationship between a liberal and sceptical statesman and the subject people, is a matter which he has to concern himself with. Naudé sheds some light even on this. On the one hand, he spoke of the populace with the greatest contempt, saying

[1] It was the ideal of the *honnête homme*, which arose in France after the beginning of the seventeenth century. Cf. Erna Priest, *Margarete von Navarra und die Frauenfrage*. Berlin Dissertation, 1925.

that they were more stupid than the beasts, for the latter indeed were not gifted with reason, but only instinct; the rude masses however misused reason in a thousand ways, and thus offered a stage for stump-orators, false prophets and charlatans, for tragedies of blood, a very sea exposed to every wind and storm. On the other hand however, he considered it worth while to rule this sea, and to lead the masses round by the nose, by using just such methods of cheating and deception, preachers and miracles, fine feathers and skilfully composed manifestos. Naudé may often have discussed this with Campanella. This has quite the same ring as his remark that a ruler who has twelve good orators at his disposal will get more obedience than if he had two armies. But whereas Campanella, with all his arts of agitationist deception, ultimately wanted to prepare the way for a real religion of the future, Naudé viewed the problem of religion in a completely practical and utilitarian manner—empirically sober, but therefore in the last resort also flat. He certainly assigned a high value to the powerful forces of religious enthusiasm, and judged that La Rochelle might be more effectively defended by the forty preachers who had taken refuge in the city than by all the soldiers and captains there. But he scarcely troubled to distinguish between religion and superstition. At least, for him, the two were almost inseparably mingled. And so he arrived at the conclusion that superstition was the strongest force for activating a people, and that religion was the easiest and most certain means of attaining political ends. It can and therefore must be directed by the politician, and the best religion is that which is the broadest. *La plus commune doctrine est toujours la meilleure* (p. 201). It was therefore a great mistake that Luther had been allowed to establish himself. He should have been rendered harmless by a *coup d'état*, or won over with a pension and sinecure. Would Richelieu indeed ever have achieved his goal against the Huguenots without buying out their best captains?

Rohan's example showed us better and nobler means of winning people over, and indeed that the intellectual realm of *raison d'état* was itself capable of producing such nobler means. And if it was the case that Naudé showed us the everlasting danger, when acting and thinking in accordance with *raison d'état*, of falling into the habit of despising men and ideas, yet he also demonstrates for us now, with his picture of the ideal statesman which he drew at the end of his book, the higher ethical possibilities contained in the vital pattern of the political man. He clearly had Richelieu in mind, even if it was an idealized Richelieu.

He took the latter as a starting-point, and advised the rulers to follow the example of Louis XIII and put themselves in the hands of *one* strong minister, making the freest choice of individuals, and not excluding even foreigners, even scholars, even monks (he cited the case of Paolo Sarpi). He had to possess three qualities: *la force, la justice et la prudence.*

By *force* he meant a mental disposition which would always be uniformly firm and heroic, capable of seeing everything, hearing everything and doing everything without becoming agitated. To acquire this virtue one would have to reflect continually on the subject of human nature and its weakness, on the vanity of the honours of this world, on the weakness of our spirit, on the changeability and impermanence of things, on the multiplicity of opinions—in short, on the great advantages there are in eschewing wickedness and choosing to be virtuous. I would wish, he says, that the statesman should live in the world as if he stood outside it, and move beneath heaven as if he were placed above it. I would wish him to know that the court is the place where more stupid things are said and done than anywhere else in the world, and where fortune is more stupid and blind than elsewhere—so that he should soon learn not to be upset by it. I would wish him to be capable of gazing, without batting an eyelid, on those who are richer than he is and deserve it less. I would wish him to devote himself to a noble poverty; to a freedom which was philosophical and yet nevertheless that of a man of the world. I would wish that he should be in the world as if he were only there by accident, and be at the court as if only there on loan, and be in the service of a master for the sole purpose of giving him proper satisfaction. This fundamental disposition, which normally leads men into apathy, candour and natural goodness, will induce in him a loyalty that will bear up under good or bad fortune and will be free from every other wish but that of serving his master well in a state of life in which he and his family are properly supported and freed from material anxiety—as soon as he wants more than this, the door is opened for disloyalty and betrayal. He should believe nothing but what he sees with his own eyes. The methods he uses to deceive others should not be allowed to deceive the man himself. Superstition makes one blind. If one anoints one's eyes with holy water, then one begins to think one can do away with all the bad acts in one's life, and one finds scruples where there are none. Superstition makes one stupid, impertinent, wicked—one must say to it, 'Away with thee!'

The second basic virtue of justice demands that one should live in accordance with the laws of God and Nature, with no feigned virtue, with a religion without fear or scruple, with no other idea but that this is how one ought to live as a man of honour. However, since in practice this natural and principal form of justice is occasionally inconvenient and outmoded, one is frequently obliged, owing to necessity of State (*la nécessité des polices et Estats*), to adopt a special artificial form of justice which is political, and which will force one to do many things that would be absolutely condemned by the standards of natural justice. It is therefore worth while to combine what is profitable with what is honourable as much as possible, never let oneself be used as a tool for

the passions of one's master, and never propose anything to him which one does not oneself believe to be necessary for maintaining the State, the welfare of the people or the safety of the ruler.

The third basic virtue—that of prudence, the queen of political virtue —consists in the ability to keep something secret, if it is not suitable to express it; it consists in letting one's speech be prompted by necessity rather than ambition, in not treating anyone badly or despising them, in praising one's companions more than oneself—and lastly in loving God and serving one's neighbour, and neither wishing for death nor fearing it. One cannot hope to find all this united in one man. One should choose the one who has most of it.

To live in the world as if one stood outside it: this was also the basic idea that underlay the intellectual and spiritual asceticism which proceeded from Calvinism and which has essentially helped to produce the rational attitude of capitalist economy. But the mental asceticism of the great statesman, which Naudé was calling for, lacked any of the religious, or even merely ethical, enthusiasm which Calvinism expressed. Quite certainly, however, it was not lacking in spiritual ardour, in spite of all its gentlemanly moderation of tone and in spite of all its hard and unscrupulous utilitarianism. His picture also still bears a trace of the feudal honour of the nobleman, and it was easier for this to maintain itself in France than in Italy where the Middle Ages were left behind more quickly. Altogether, it is really a residue of the older moral ideals and values which must serve here to furnish the ethos of the statesman with the firm grip required to withstand the temptations of power; but at the same time, since it must be combined with the element of coldness peculiar to *raison d'état*, it must necessarily submit to being tempered and weakened considerably. One catches a ring of the new ethos of the national greatness and honour of one's native country, and (if one remembers that the example of Richelieu is distinctly present here) it is probably more strongly felt than expressed. But it still lacks a certain depth and vitality; and the people, whose welfare (together with the honour of the ruler) ought to engross all the sympathies of the statesman, are looked down on simultaneously from above and despised. A remarkable and contradictory combination of arrogance and humility, of morality and immorality, of heroic grandeur, spiritual strength, and superficiality. But these and similar contradictions are constantly re-appearing in the psychology of the modern statesman, which appears so simple at first glance, but on closer examination often seems labyrinthine.

And something, which has often forced itself on our attention already, is endorsed by Naudé's ideas. *Raison d'état* became one of the most important elements that prepared the way for the Enlightenment, on account of the characteristic mental attitude which it demanded and

on account of the fundamental loosening up of all dogmatic values. Ideas which make each other fruitful in this manner, are yet capable also of standing in the most direct internal opposition to one another. The very Enlightenment itself, as a result of its humanitarian individualism based on natural rights, was capable later on of struggling most passionately against *raison d'état*. We already saw one of the first signs of this criticism in Comenius. In France it set in earlier still, indeed simultaneously with the budding doctrine of State interest. In 1623 Emeric Crucé published his book *Nouveau Cynée*; this was the programme for a pacifism which would embrace the whole of humanity, quite on the lines of world-citizenship, and it was much more significant and rich in ideas than the well-known plan of the Duke of Sully, which sprang much more from French ambition than from a pure love of peace. For it derived from a rationalist and deist view of the world (a view that was already almost entirely complete in itself); it put morality before dogma, set a high value on peaceful work of civilization, and combated the prejudices which nations had against one another. If Naudé was (as we were able to say with certainty) a pupil of Montaigne, then (as has been suggested) this is also true of Crucé on whom the modern pacifists now bestow their affections.[1] One must remember once again the whole movement towards free thought in Western Europe, and the new spirit which burst out in Campanella and Giordano Bruno. These first decades of the seventeenth century were already beginning something which would not become mature until a whole century later. But if previously the Counter-Reformation had repressed the worldly spirit of the Renaissance, now the new dominating vital force of mature absolutism sustained by *raison d'état* stepped in between them, and restricted the free progress of the individualistic movement by the very fact of its own widely-developing existence. And yet later (as we have seen) it would be of some service to it again. Thus, in a peculiar kind of clinch, ideas work for and against one another in history.

[1] Cf. Lange, *Histoire de l'internationalisme*, I, 397 ff., and the literature referred to there. Reprint of the *Nouveau Cynée* by T. W. Balch with an English translation, Philadelphia 1909.

BOOK TWO

THE AGE OF MATURE ABSOLUTISM

CHAPTER EIGHT

A GLANCE AT GROTIUS, HOBBES AND SPINOZA

THE wealth of content in the idea of *raison d'état* does not allow itself to be forced into the close fetters of an abstract definition. For this reason (as we remarked in the Introduction) it is also impossible for our investigation to confine itself to indicating the presence of a unified and rigidly demarcated stream of intellectual development down the centuries. We must follow out the effects of the idea in whichever quarter they are for the moment being produced most strongly and broadly. Thus first one aspect, and then another aspect, of the entire problem will be examined closely, and the peculiar character of the successive historical epochs will make itself clearly felt in the process. Certainly, the contents of these epochs do also overlap with one another. For this reason we treated the spread in Germany of the chief doctrines of *raison d'état*, without making any pause for the deep division in the middle of the century, and taking them right up as far as the period of Louis XIV. During this period then, the dominant idea (apart from Germany itself) was the doctrine of State interests, which had arisen out of the doctrine of *raison d'état*. For the statesmen of the great powers had now heard enough about *raison d'état* in general; whereas just at this moment, being in the first flourishing stage of absolutist cabinet-policy, they were very responsive to all the concrete problems and devices of the policy of interest. But before going on to describe the most important representatives of the doctrine of interest during this period of time, we have to answer the question of what attitude the great and leading State theorists of the seventeenth century adopted towards the problem of *raison d'état*, and what significance it had for their doctrines about the State. The remarkable fact is that only one of them, the German Pufendorf, directly accepted the doctrines of *raison d'état* and State interest, and for this reason he must be considered by himself. Grotius, Hobbes and Spinoza on the other hand did not make a direct use of the doctrines, but rather built their theories

of the State on the traditional foundation of Natural Law, which they developed along their own lines. The immense power of the old tradition of Natural Law is shown by the fact that even the most emancipated thinkers of the century lay under its spell and (in an age when empiricism was already beginning) made no attempt to grasp the handhold which the doctrine of *raison d'état* offered towards a new empirical doctrine of the State. But, being great and profound thinkers, besides imbibing the old tradition they also mentally digested the living reality of State life and of the whole world in general; and it was only directly, by reason of this fact, that they came into contact with the problems of *raison d'état*, and to some extent developed ideas in the process which broke up the presuppositions they had made on the basis of Natural Law. It is these disruptive ideas that are bound to arouse the greatest interest on our part.

The one who remained furthest from these problems was Hugo Grotius, the principal founder of modern international law.[1] This was due to the nature of his task. International law and *raison d'état* stand in natural opposition to one another. International law wishes to restrict the sway of *raison d'état*, and give it as much of a legal character as possible. *Raison d'état*, however, chafes under this restriction, and makes use of law, in fact very frequently misuses it, as a means towards its own egotistical ends. By doing so, *raison d'état* is continually shattering the foundations which international law has just painfully attempted to lay. In many ways, international law is performing a labour of Sisyphus by struggling with *raison d'état*; and this tends to become more so, the less international law troubles itself about the essential nature and requirements of *raison d'état*. For then it is in danger, from the outset, of becoming unreal, unpractical and doctrinaire. And however great were the intellectual accomplishments and scientific credit due to Grotius, yet he himself succumbed to this danger on a number of essential points. It was not as if this arose from any lack of knowledge about political reality. When, in Paris in 1625, he finished his great work *De jure belli ac pacis*, he already possessed a wealth of political experience, and had tasted the sorrows of the political refugee. He knew the world, and knew what statecraft was; but he deliberately kept this knowledge quite apart from his work. 'I have abstained from everything', he says in the Introduction,[2] 'that belongs to other provinces, such as the doctrine of what is profitable, since this belongs to the special art of politics. I have only mentioned these other questions quite perfunctorily in different places, in order to distinguish them

[1] Cf. also Lotte Barschak, *Die Staatsanschauung des Hugo Grotius. Bijdragen voor vaderlandsche Geschiednis III.* Erik Wolf, *Grotius, Pufendorf, Thomasius*, 1927, does not touch on our problems.

[2] *Prolegomena*, § 57.

more clearly from the question of law.' Scientific thought, having not yet become properly adjusted to the organic reciprocal effects of the various provinces of life, could find no other way of keeping them all logically separate from one another, except the superficial method of treating each one in complete isolation. And so Grotius constructed his system of international law, just as if there did not exist any such thing as *raison d'état*, or any constraining force tending to push States over the frontiers of morality and law; just as if it were possible altogether to confine the behaviour of States to one another within legal and moral bounds. In the process, he mingled law and morality together promiscuously at every step. But standing behind all this were his own view of life and his own personality, which was altogether noble, gentle and full of human feeling. He built up his ideas about law and the State on the foundation of a belief in humanity, a belief in the sociable and altruistic impulses of men, and a belief especially in the solidarity of the Christian peoples. In him, the old traditions of the *Corpus Christianum* were already passing over into the modern civil and liberal ideals of life, infused with feeling, such as were now capable of developing amongst the Dutch commercial aristocracy. He, the advocate of arbitration in conflict between nations, is entitled to a much larger place in the history of the pacifist idea [1] than in the history of the idea of *raison d'état*. His feeling was decidedly unheroic when he advised conquered nations that it was better for them to accept their fate, than to continue a hopeless struggle for their freedom—since reason valued life more highly than it did freedom! [2] This was also a utilitarian way of thinking; but he looked upon *raison d'état* and the policy of interest as a lower form of usefulness, compared with the higher and more permanent advantage afforded by the maintenance of natural law and the international law of nations.[3] And even if (he added) one might not be able to see any profit in acting in accordance with justice, it would still be a matter of wisdom and not stupidity to act in that manner to which we feel drawn by our nature.

Certainly the struggle, waged by his international law and usage of war against barbarism and crude force, was productive of many blessings; and, in spite of the fact that more than one of its requirements has proved excessive, it has also exerted a beneficial influence on the practice of nations. Indeed it is seldom that great ethical ideals arise in life which do not carry with them some admixture of illusion. But he firmly believed in the old illusion, that it would always be possible to distinguish the 'just war' from the wars that were unjust and

[1] Cf. in this connection Lange, *Histoire de l'internationalisme*, I.

[2] *De jure belli et pacis*, Bk. II, ch. XXIV, § VI; cf. Bk. II, ch. VI, § V, and Bk. III, ch. XXV, § IV.

[3] *Prolegomena*, § 18.

impermissible; and this illusion was capable of actually increasing the difficulty of the situations, and of increasing rather than lessening the sources of conflict and occasions of war. He declared that it was the duty of neutrals to do nothing which was capable of strengthening the defender of the bad cause, or of hindering the enterprise of the just cause.[1] But what could this mean, except that the neutral should take sides, on the basis of a judgment of moral value, which would always tend to be influenced by his personal interest, by his *raison d'état*? Indeed even wars of intervention, undertaken for motives of pure morality and justice, in order to punish a glaring injustice by a ruler against his subjects, or crude infringements of international law and the law of nature, were held by him to be unjustified.[2] That cases could arise, in which the conscience of the whole civilized world might cry out against one who scorned justice and humanity, and interfere with full authority to stop it, is a fact which has to be recognized even today, and indeed particularly today. But every influx of unpolitical motives into the province of pure conflicts of power and interest brings with it the danger that these motives will be misused and debased by the naturally stronger motives of mere profit, of *raison d'état*. The latter resembles some mud-coloured stream that swiftly changes all the purer waters flowing into it into its own murky colour. The wars of intervention during the period of the Holy Alliance, and the misuse of moral and legal motives by Germany's opponents during the World War, offer proof of this.

* * *

Thought and action prompted by pure *raison d'état* are not easily compatible with such an optimistic view of the nature of men and States as that held by Grotius, who therein showed himself a precursor of the philanthropic eighteenth century. Machiavelli had started out with a deeply pessimistic view of average human nature. Thomas Hobbes resembles him in this. It is essentially for this reason that, in his powerful theoretical system about the State, the idea of *raison d'état* (though Hobbes does not use this actual expression) [3] makes its presence felt much more strongly than in the case of Grotius. Yet at the same time it becomes apparent that a profound and constantly-recurring disagreement in the matter of judging basic human nature, such as existed between Grotius and Hobbes, was capable of developing against a general background of the same intellectual type. For Hobbes too thought strictly along the lines of Natural Law. The Natural Law,

[1] Bk. III, ch. XVII, § III, 1. [2] Bk. II, ch. XX, § XL, 1; ch. XXV, § VIII, 2.
[3] The *ratio civitatis*, which he talks about (*De cive*, I, ch. II, 1), is identical with the *lex civilis*.

according to which the State was to be built up, was none other than the dictate of Reason; it was unchangeable and eternal, since Reason remained the same and changed neither its ends nor its means.[1] But—and here began the thought-processes which essentially widened and finally shattered the notion of Natural Law (based as this was on an identity between Reason and Nature)—Reason constituted only one part of human nature, which also embraced all the other capabilities and impulses of man, and therefore included his passions and egoisms too. And it was these that the stern glance of Hobbes saw predominating everywhere. Hobbes taught that the attitude of one man to another is by nature that of a wolf. If he were not hindered by fear, his nature would incline him, not towards social life, but towards domination. It was not true that man was by nature a *ζῷον πολιτικόν*. It was not mutual benevolence, but mutual fear, that formed the basis of all the more important and permanent relationships. We are not concerned here with making any closer examination or criticism of the way in which (according to Hobbes' doctrine) this common motive of fear combines all of a sudden to operate with the dictate of Reason, and of how, from the original state of 'the war of all against all', a contract made between everyone and everyone else can all of a sudden give rise to the State.[2] But one can already imagine, from the pessimism of his basic conception of human nature, that this State must inevitably be prodigiously strong, in order to control the bestial element in man. This State is the *Leviathan*, which is extolled in his famous political masterpiece of 1651. By means of the ingenious artifice, that the power of the person holding authority in the State must be held to rest, not indeed (as had previously been taught) on a contract which he himself had concluded with the people, but instead on a contract which the people had concluded amongst themselves,[3] Hobbes succeeded in freeing the holder of State authority from all duties and restrictions arising out of any contract; he succeeded in furnishing this executive with almost unlimited resources of power, and in raising the *Leviathan* to the status of 'a mortal god'.[4] The extent of his power in the State and of the citizens' obligations of obedience towards him are not quite unlimited, since Hobbes (in agreement with most theorists of *raison d'état*) recognized that the executive would be subject to the moderating bounds of divine and natural law. But he knew how to make even these bounds practically unreal by means of a series of subtle and artificial

[1] *Loc. cit.*, I, ch. I, Conclusion; ch. III, 29.

[2] Concerning the ambiguities of his theory on this point, cf. Tönnies in *Klassiker der Politik*, 13, 10 (translation of Hobbes' early work on politics and natural right of 1640).

[3] On this, cf. Gierke, *Althusius*[3], 86, and Jellinek, *Allg. Staatslehre*, Bk. 2, ch. 7.

[4] *Leviathan*, II, ch. 17 and 28.

syllogisms, so that finally, out of all the original rights to freedom possessed by men, almost the only one that still remained was the inner freedom of thought and belief, which by the very nature of things the State was incapable of destroying altogether. 'For if the law declared be not against the law of Nature, which is undoubtedly God's law, and he undertake to obey it, he is bound by his own act; bound I say to obey it, but not bound to believe it. . . .' [1]

The action of State authority thus appears to be freed of all fetters, and the idea of *raison d'état* to have reached its zenith. It is also an idea of the purest *raison d'état* when, in answer to the fear that the Leviathan may misuse its power to enslave and ill-treat its subjects, he says that the holder of State authority would be induced on account of his own interest to rule reasonably, to promote the *salus populi* and treat his subjects with care.[2] In general a spirit of supreme rationality and expediency pervades the description of what would have to be done and permitted within the State. With great insight, for example, a warning is issued against excessive legislation. It is a completely enlightened despotism that holds sway here.[3] Thus the thing that really prevails in the domestic policy of the State is what we have called the utilitarian middle-ground of *raison d'état*.

And moreover, as regards the relationships between States, there also prevails what we have recognized to be the natural basic task of *raison d'état*, namely the struggle for security and self-preservation at any price, and by any means. For it is only the internal affairs of States that receive a rational pacification by means of the setting up of a State. Between the States themselves (since no higher Leviathan can be set in authority over them) there continues to exist the *bellum omnium contra omnes*, with all the logical pressure of the original state of Nature. Here then all the power-measures, cunning ruses and underhand tricks of Machiavellism are permissible.[4] Even if, at some moment, the States are not waging any war among themselves, it is still not a state of peace that exists, but only a breathing space. Even agreements may be broken, if the security of the State demands it. Whereas, within the State, it is the very fact that agreements should be abided by with the utmost punctilio, which is to serve as a foundation for the whole and be a requirement of the law of Nature. Hobbes distinguished sharply between a 'law of Nature' and a 'right of Nature'. For him law was equivalent to duty and limitation, right was equivalent to freedom, i.e. the very freedom of the state of Nature.[5] And so the conception of

[1] *Leviathan*, II, ch. 26.
[2] *De cive*, II, ch. 10, §§ 2 and 18; ch. 13, §§ 2 ff.; *Leviathan*, II, ch. 18 and 30.
[3] *De cive*, II, ch. 13, § 15.
[4] *Ibid.*, II, ch. 13, § 7; *Leviathan*, I, ch. 13; II, ch. 17 and 21.
[5] *Ibid.*, I, ch. 14; *Klassiker d. Politik*, 13, 207.

international law, which Grotius had just established as offering a limitation to conflict between nations, was abruptly overthrown by Hobbes with the following remark: 'Concerning the offices of one sovereign to another, which are comprehended in that law, which is commonly called the "law of nations", I need not say anything in this place, because the law of nations, and the law of Nature, is the same thing. And every sovereign hath the same right, in procuring the safety of his people, that any particular man can have in procuring the safety of his own body. And the same law that dictateth to men that have no civil government, what they ought to do, and what to avoid in regard of one another, dictateth the same to commonwealths, that is, to the consciences of sovereign princes and sovereign assemblies. . . .' [1]

At the same time he quite agreed that a nation whose own territory no longer sufficed for it to be self-supporting might rise up and seek its final hope of deliverance in war, in order to find satisfaction either in victory or defeat.[2] But a voracious hunger for mere extension of power and domination was described by him as a sickness of the State, which had laid low Athens and Carthage.[3] And he stated that wars of plunder and rapine, as a means of acquiring wealth, were contrary to nature.[4] This is already a first sign that it was not the pure conception of power that was predominant in his doctrine regarding the state of Nature that existed between sovereign States. The ruthless policy of power, which in this matter he was ready to permit, was nevertheless permitted and justified by him only as a means towards a rationally predetermined object, for the sake of the security, the well-being and the permanently consolidated wealth of the individual State and nation. But was this really infused with the spirit of the most genuine *raison d'état*? Was it true that in the process the State itself was felt as a living and important personality, which had a value and a purpose of its own and which possessed, in *raison d'état*, a law laying down the lines along which it should live and perfect itself? For it was this that underlay (though often it might have been unconscious and unexpressed) all deliberation hitherto on the subject of necessity of State and *raison d'état*. For Hobbes the State was certainly a personality. But it was an artificial one, a *homo artificialis*, fundamentally a piece of clockwork machinery, manufactured by human ingenuity, in order to promote the objects of men, i.e. of individual men. For, if once one analyses it, one sees that a completely individualistic and eudaemonistic spirit pervades everything that he has to say on the subject of the final purposes of the State.

[1] *Leviathan*, II, ch. 30; cf. *Klassiker d. Politik*, 13, 211. Cf. also G. Jaeger, *Der Ursprung der modernen Staatswissenschaft usw., Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 14, 4 (1901), p. 556.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

[3] *Loc. cit.*, ch. 29.

[4] *De cive*, II, ch. 13, § 14. Cf. also *Klassiker d. Politik*, 13, 205.

A characteristically important role is assigned there to the *commoda vitae*, the *delectatio*, the *jucundissime et beate vivere* of the individual citizen.[1] Not indeed in the sense that the State must now pay any special attention specifically to *individuals* as such, but rather that in his opinion it was only in the functioning of the State as a whole that individuals could be properly cared for. There is already a portent here of that 'greatest happiness of the greatest number', which was later to be proclaimed by Jeremy Bentham.[2] And however paradoxical it may sound, this Leviathan State of colossal strength was also intimately related to that weakly State-form of later liberal and philanthropic rationalism which used to be called the 'Nightwatchman State'. The difference between the two lay only in the means, and not in the ends. In one just as in the other, the goal aimed at was the welfare, the safety and the comfort of individuals. But whereas at the close of the absolutist era people were thoroughly tired of its police oppression, and yet at the same time spoiled by the civilizing results it had produced, and thought they would be able to manage with a State which was as weak as possible, Hobbes on the other hand, shaken and angered by the misery of the English Civil War (which threatened to lead back into the natural state of the *bellum omnium contra omnes*), felt he must be on the look-out for as strong a watchman as possible, that would guard him not only in the night but in the day as well. I want tranquillity, that is the cry which echoes through his books. He hated the Civil War because it disturbed the order and comfort of the citizens. To this hatred of the Civil War there was added a second basic motive for his cult of State omnipotence: this was a hatred against the Church and against the force of dogmatic belief in miracles. The Man of the Enlightenment, already present in him, sought refuge with the State in the sure hope that it (even if one gave it full authority over Church and cult) would nevertheless not encroach upon inner freedom of thought, because external obedience on the part of the citizens would be fully adequate for it.

It was a thoroughly English idea this, of requiring from the citizens that they should most strictly maintain the moral and religious conventions which the State had found it necessary to establish for the sake of the general welfare, while at the same time leaving them free to think inwardly and believe whatever they wanted.

So Hobbes' *Leviathan*, which one is accustomed to consider the supreme climax of the absolutist conception of the State and *raison d'état*, does not really serve the absolutist idea of the State for the sake of that idea itself, but rather for the sake of those advantages which

[1] Cf. *De cive*, II, ch. 13, § 6, 16; *Leviathan*, II, ch. 30; *Klassiker d. Politik*, 13, 160. Cf. also Gierke, *Althusius*[2], 189 f.

[2] *De cive*, II, ch. 13, § 3.

the mass of individuals are expected to derive from it. The Leviathan has no individual soul, though Hobbes does speak of such a soul and ascribes it to the holder of State authority.[1] It is in fact an artificial soul, a clockwork spring. If for external reasons this should cease to function, then the whole clockwork machinery stops too, and the state of Nature, which existed prior to the formation of the State, arises once again. Nothing is more indicative of this than the doctrine that, if the monarch should choose to abolish the succession of his sons, then after his death the monarchic State would cease to exist, and the natural rights of all would come to life once more, even if descendants of the ruler were still alive.[2] This mechanically contrived State of advantage and expediency can indeed, for the sake of the general advantage of everybody, call for blind obedience from its citizens, but it cannot require from them that devotion founded on faith and that attachment to the State, which might be expected from them by the truly living and personal State, even by the *virtù*-republic of Machiavelli. Two examples will illustrate this. (*a*) A citizen who has fallen into captivity in an enemy country is justified in saving his life by becoming an enemy subject. Hobbes finds nothing dishonourable or unpatriotic in this. (*b*) A citizen, called up by the State to serve in a war, can ask to be released, provided he finds a substitute.[3] If one were to come across these doctrines in a rationalist of the late eighteenth century, one would reproach him with an egotistical mistrust of the State and with a sentiment of *ubi bene ibi patria*. But the author of the *Leviathan* held these doctrines.

Even his preference for monarchic absolutism was founded on utilitarian grounds and not on sentimental reasons, and it was therefore free from propagandist zeal. Certainly he considered it far and away the best State-form; but all the same every established State ought to keep the form that it has. For it would be radically harmful, if the citizens of a State were not content with its form, and cast longing glances at the more fortunate State-form of neighbouring nations. For this reason also the citizens of a republic should not be allowed even to dream of envying a neighbouring nation the blessings of monarchy.[4] He readily acknowledged even the rule of Cromwell.[5]

Hobbes' doctrine of the State is one of the most remarkable examples of the dialectic of development, of the transitions possible from one idea to another, and of the way in which the very culminating point of the older idea can lead over into the more recent and modern idea. Here, under cover of the harshest absolutism, there was already alive

[1] *Ibid.*, II, ch. 6, § 19. [2] *Leviathan*, II, ch. 21.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, ch. 21; cf. also *Klassiker der Politik*, 13, 149.
[4] *Leviathan*, II, ch. 30.
[5] Hönigswald, *Hobbes und die Staatsphilosophie*, 1924, p. 18.

that new element which we previously saw germinating also in the case of Grotius: that Western European type of individualism and utilitarianism which sought to adapt the State to the needs of the middle classes, and was capable in the process of wanting it to be either as strong as possible or as weak as possible, depending on the circumstances.

And at the same time the doctrine showed that the idea of *raison d'état*, if it remained stuck at its utilitarian middle stage, could not attain that degree of internal strength and perfection of which it was capable, but that on the contrary it was actually in danger of coming to grief among tendencies that led away from the State. Mere egoism and that which is merely useful, in however rational and knowledgeable a manner it might be advocated (as in the case of Hobbes), will never serve as an internal connecting-link to hold great human communities together. Some sort of higher feelings of moral and intellectual values must be superadded to thought and action which is in accordance with *raison d'état*, if the latter is to lead on to its climax. In the case of the statesman it is generally a simple love of the thing itself, of the State, the Fatherland, that ennobles and strengthens his utilitarian operation according to *raison d'état*. In the case of a political thinker, the oceanic chilliness of *raison d'état* is capable of being warmed by the ardour of a great view of the world and of life. Machiavelli's ideal of *virtù* could do this. Hobbes' philosophy, founded as it was on mechanical atomism and egoism, could not. Could it be done perhaps by the mind of Spinoza, philosophizing *sub specie aeterni*?

* * *

It was the problem of the State as a living organism which on two occasions (apart from short incursions into ethics) Spinoza treated at great length in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, which appeared in 1670 but had already originated in the years before 1665, and in the *Tractatus politicus*, which he left unfinished when he died in 1677. The changes in viewpoint that took place between the two works have been very carefully pointed out by Menzel.[1] We shall only consider them here to the extent demanded by our general problem.

It is an indication of the strength and fertility of the Hobbesian doctrine of the State, and of the power of attraction it was able to exert

[1] *Wandlungen in der Staatslehre Spinozas. Festschrift für Joseph Unger*, 1898. Also the essays by the same author: *Homo sui juris* in Grünhut's *Zeitschr f. Privat- u. öffentlich. Recht*, 32 (1905), *Der Sozialvertrag bei Spinoza* in the same, 34 (1907), in which he defends his interpretation against the objections of Gierke (*Althusius*², 342 ff.) and somewhat exaggerates certain points, and *Spinoza und die deutsche Staatslehre der Gegenwart, Schmollers Jahrbuch*, 31. Cf. also Rosin, *Bismarck und Spinoza, Parallelen ihrer Staatsanschauung*, in the *Festschrift für Otto Gierkes 70. Geburtstag*, and E. Kohn, *Spinoza und der Staat*, Berlin Dissertation, 1926.

pre-eminently on free and bold spirits, that Spinoza (who was by no means of an absolutist turn of mind, but on the contrary was inclined first towards democracy, and later towards aristocracy) was still under the spell of its basic ideas, and took it as a starting-point for developing his own doctrine of the State. While on the one hand he deflected and toned down the theory's political consequences (which served the purposes of absolute monarchy), at the same time he went more profoundly into its presuppositions regarding the view of the universe, and thus opened up new and fruitful possibilities in the matter of understanding the State as a living organism, and so too in the matter of understanding *raison d'état*. Everything depended on being able to find a path which would lead over from the mode of thought that dealt in terms of Natural Law and the Law of Reason (a mode of thought which tried, from the resources of human reason, to construct the best State, the State that ought to exist), to that type of realism and empiricism which threw light on the real State. Hobbes had pointed out such a path, when he distinguished between a law of Nature and a right of Nature. By natural right he understood the freedom of the state of Nature; by natural law he meant the command of a reason fully cognizant of its own advantage. On the basis of this kind of natural right it was then possible (as we have seen) for the harsh reality of the way in which States behaved towards each other to be recognized forthwith as a fixed and inalterable datum—whereas certainly, within the State itself, the rational idea of the best State, the State that ought to exist, triumphed once again, and the old device (stemming purely from the law of reason) of an agreement that gives rise to the State was taken as a foundation. Spinoza was now very willing to take over straight away from Hobbes the new concept of Natural Right, because it fitted in perfectly with his pantheistic and strictly causal picture of the world. 'By natural right,' it says in the *Tractatus politicus* (2, 4), 'I understand those laws or rules of Nature in accordance with which everything happens, that is to say, the power of Nature itself. . . . Consequently, everything that a man does in accordance with the laws of his nature, is done by the highest natural right, and his right over nature stretches as far as his power.' Hobbes had already said: [1] '. . . But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires and other passions of man are in themselves no sin.' It is an idea of enormous revolutionary consequence; for it led not only to Determinism, but also to Relativism, to an unqualified recognition of all forces operating in a natural and elemental manner, and once the individual element in these forces had been discovered it also led on to modern historicism. At that time men were certainly not yet in a position to draw all these consequences. But one can understand that Spinoza was now capable of surveying in its entirety the

[1] *Leviathan*, I, ch. 13.

organic life of the State, in a quite different and much more realistic manner than was to be expected from the usual doctrine of the best possible State. In words which recall the famous programme of Machiavelli in Chapter 15 of the *Principe*, Spinoza (in the opening of the *Tractatus politicus*) rejects the method of those who start talking about man as he ought to be, instead of as he really is; and he declared that it would be his task, not to laugh at human affairs, nor to lament them, nor even to execrate them, but simply to understand them. For he had the sublime consolation of believing that the power of natural things was nothing else but the eternal power of God, and that whatever in Nature appeared to us as bad, only appeared so because we were not fully aware of the inter-relatedness of the whole of Nature. It was through this religious mentality, which amid all the dissonances of Nature could still catch the sound of the harmony of a divine unity, that he raised himself above the harshly mechanical mode of thought belonging to Hobbes. This state of nature in which all warred against all, and in which (once the State had been established) the sovereign States themselves stood permanently in relation to one another and of necessity had to do so—this state of nature was crudely and brutally recognized by Hobbes as a fact. Now it was true that Spinoza, just like Hobbes, was prepared to concede to the States the rights of a state of nature in regard to their relations with one another, and hence he was also prepared to concede them the right to a policy of interest unhampered by any obligation with regard to agreements; at the same time he also gave it to be understood that it was only the inadequacy of human insight that caused men to be shocked by the conflict between politics and morality, and that, looked at *sub specie aeterni*, even this mode of behaviour on the part of States was the Will of God and the Work of God. The actual expression *raison d'état* was used by him almost as little as by Hobbes. But we may now say that in actual practice he did in the process succeed in incorporating this principle (namely, that the struggles between States were governed by *raison d'état*) within the system of a philosophy which was designed to offer consolation to the world in ideal terms. This was only possible for a strictly monistic and pantheistic philosophy. In this he showed himself a forerunner of Hegel.

This doctrine of Spinoza, that in the interests of its own self-preservation the State was entitled, indeed was obliged, to break agreements, remained untouched by the changes which his doctrine of the State underwent in other respects between the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* and the *Tractatus politicus*. In the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, it says (ch. 16, § 45 f.): 'For although different States make treaties not to harm one another, they always take every possible precaution against such treaties being broken by the stronger party, and do not rely on the

compact, unless there is a sufficiently obvious object and advantage to both parties in observing it. Otherwise they would fear a breach of faith, nor would there be any wrong done thereby: for who in his proper senses, and aware of the right of the sovereign power, would trust in the promises of one who has the will and the power to do what he likes, and who aims solely at the safety and advantage of his dominion? Moreover, if we consult loyalty and religion, we shall see that no one in possession of power ought to abide by his promises to the injury of his dominion; for he cannot keep such promises without breaking the engagement he made with his subjects, by which both he and they are most solemnly bound.' And the *Tractatus politicus* says (III, 14): 'This contract (between States) remains so long unmoved as the motive for entering into it, that is, fear of hurt or hope of gain, subsists. But take away from either commonwealth this hope or fear, and it is left independent, and the link, whereby the commonwealths were mutually bound, breaks of itself. And therefore every commonwealth has the right to break its contract, whenever it chooses, and cannot be said to act treacherously or perfidiously in breaking its word, as soon as the motive of hope or fear is removed, for both contracting parties were on equal terms in this respect.' In addition, agreements for the future could only be concluded on the hypothesis of the existing situation continuing. If this should change, then the *ratio* of the entire State would change too—thus one sees that, in dealing with this decisively important point, he too makes use for once of the ready-coined phrase that was on everybody's lips.

The fact that he did not absolutely condemn, either, alliances made by Christian States with Turks and heathens, can be imagined already from his own Jewish background. But at the same time he could also fall back on the Dutch principle of State that relationships with heathen States should be handled with care.[1]

First and foremost the State had to continue existing; and State ethics (this too can be found in Spinoza) took precedence over private ethics. 'Consequently there can be no duty towards our neighbour which would not become an offence if it involved injury to the whole State, nor can there be any offence against our duty towards our neighbour, or anything but loyalty in what we do for the sake of preserving the State.' [2] Thus he too, like Hobbes, gave *raison d'état* complete freedom of action within the State. The State was not bound by the laws and by civil rights, which really depended much more on its decisions alone.[3] Here the State was obliged to act as the interest of its own self-preservation demanded or, as Spinoza put in: 'The commonwealth, then,

[1] *Tractatus theol.-pol.*, ch. 16, § 67. He did indeed issue a warning against concluding such alliances, but required that if they were concluded they should be kept.
[2] *Ibid.*, ch. 19, § 22. [3] *Tractatus politicus*, IV, 4 and 5.

to "maintain its independence",[1] is bound to preserve the causes of fear and reverence, otherwise it ceases to be a commonwealth.' This meant that, in order to maintain itself, it ought to make use of its power-resources in a rational and not an arbitrary manner. 'The State is then most completely "independent", when it acts according to the dictates of reason.' Like Hobbes he also relied upon it that the State (from its own self-interest, properly understood) would not misuse this wealth of power that was placed in its hands. The limits of State authority (he believed) were laid down for it by its own interests. Since there would be great danger for itself if it ruled outrageously, it was therefore permissible to take away its unlimited power to do so. And (as he added subtly, but quite in the spirit of his doctrine) since the right of the supreme authority extended no further than its power, one could therefore also deny it the unlimited right thereto.[2] All this was worked out in the spirit of pure *raison d'état*.

For Spinoza right and power were indeed very closely connected. 'As each individual in the state of nature, so the body and mind of a dominion have as much right as they have power.' [3] Menzel has said that whereas in Hobbes absolute rule rests on the legally binding force of a fundamental contract, with Spinoza it rests on the actual abundance of power granted to the State authority. At the same time Hobbes had already taken the view that, besides the State based on contract, the pure power State was also valid; he had also founded the legal theory of contract itself on the idea of power when he conceded that the obligation of the citizens towards the holder of State power only lasted so long as his power to protect them lasted, provided that no other was more capable of protecting them.[4] But it is correct to say that the old theory of rational and natural rights, which assumed the State and its functions to be based on a contract, yielded even more violently in the case of Spinoza than with Hobbes before the new recognition that the very essence and life of the State depended in the first instance on power. And this was so to an even greater extent in his later work, the *Tractatus politicus*, than with the earlier *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. The maxims of the theory of contract are indeed echoed in it from time to time; but the origin of the State nevertheless appears in it much more as a natural and necessary process, brought about by the totality of spiritual forces, than as a legal act. 'Men naturally aspire to the civil state,' it says in the *Tractatus politicus* (VI, 1), 'nor can it happen that men should ever utterly dissolve it.' In saying this he was once again approaching the important ancient doctrine of Aristotle

[1] Concerning the importance in Spinoza of this concept *sui juris*, cf. Menzel's essay referred to above.

[2] *Tract. theol.-pol.*, ch. 20, § 7; cf. also ch. 16, § 29.

[3] *Tract. polit.*, III, 2.

[4] *Leviathan*, II, ch. 21.

concerning the origination of the State. Historical and political realism and empiricism grew in importance as the theory of natural right faded away. What we have been able to observe in the transition from Hobbes to Spinoza, and from the younger to the older Spinoza, does at the same time signify a certain gentle and gradual growth in the idea of *raison d'état*. This growing realism of Spinoza's has indeed been explained (and with some justification) by reference to his intercourse with a statesman like John de Witt and the shattering impression made by his catastrophic end in 1672, and at the same time by reference to the clearer working-out of his pantheistic metaphysic, which emphasized the eternal causality of nature.[1]

But what there was to say about Hobbes is also valid concerning Spinoza. Besides the line of intellectual development leading up to the idea of *raison d'état*, there is also a line leading away from it again and leading back to the previous ideas of rational and natural right.

Spinoza distinguished carefully between the laws of nature as a whole, which are for the most part inaccessible to us, and the laws of human nature, within which reason holds sway and exerts itself over the impulses.[2] It was elemental impulses and needs, and not reason, that originally gave rise to the State; but the State which is most powerful and most supreme 'in its own right' is that which is founded on and guided by reason.[3] Thus Spinoza too, in spite of his pantheistic monism, recognized that a dualism did actually exist between the realm of the universal forces of nature and the realm of human reason. This tension between universal nature and human nature led on, if monism was to be consistent, towards an internal agreement. We shall see later on, how Hegel was thereby enabled to show that he stripped the laws of human nature of their stable character (which they possessed according to the ideas of natural right) and changed them into fluid life, so that in the process there issued a unified vital stream, in which mind and nature were blended together. But for Spinoza human reason remained the same as it appeared in the light of the ideas of natural right—stable, universal, making the same demands everywhere and for all time. The consequence now was that reason too (which ought to rule in the State) was conceived not as an individual and historically changing entity, but rather as an absolute and immutable legislatrix. And this produced the further consequence that Spinoza, in spite of his great design of studying the real State, nevertheless slipped back once again into the old question of natural right, namely the inquiry as to what was the best form of the State. The entire content of both his treatises is really a search for the best and most rational State, i.e. the one which is most in accordance with universal human reason. And thus he too was

[1] Menzel, *Wandlungen usw.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 80 ff.
[2] *Tract. polit.*, II, 8.
[3] *Ibid.*, VI, 1, and V, 1.

pondering on the different forms of the State (there is no need to concern ourselves closely with the various stages he passed through) in order to adapt them to his own purposes and ideals, without treating the historical differences between the separate States in any other way than as a source of examples of good and bad patterns. He started out from that Reason which is universal, and identical in all individuals, and he also tended (like Hobbes and the school of natural right) to consider the State from the point of view of the universal needs of individuals; thus he could not consistently consider it from above, from the point of view of its own most special needs. The fact that on the whole he was nevertheless able to do this, was essentially owing to his presuppositions on the lines of pantheism and natural causation. But if in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (as we have noticed) he was already setting State morality above private morality, this was (as with Hobbes) only intended to mean that the welfare of the individual had to yield to the welfare of the State, but that the welfare of the totality of individuals must still be the aim and purpose of the State.

And even the unconditional recognition of *raison d'état* which he expressed can be (again exactly as was the case with Hobbes) traced back to a deeply individualistic motive. With him it was even more fundamentally important than with Hobbes, to protect the inner spiritual freedom of the individual. It was not only freedom of thought, but also freedom of speech and instruction that he wished to protect from the grasp of a violent State. It was essentially for this purpose, and at the same time prompted by his own hard personal life-struggles, that he wrote the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. To a certain extent it was a dialogue between the philosopher, and the seventeenth-century State that was ruled according to *raison d'état*. It was as if he cried out to it: 'I acknowledge you, you have the power—and since power and right are equivalent, you have also the right—to do anything necessary for your self-preservation. But it is when you act in accordance with reason that you will be acting most surely and most effectively and most completely "in your own right". If you rule unreasonably and violently, then you will injure yourself. I therefore expect you, if you are wise, to respect freedom of thought and also (with certain limitations, which I grant you) freedom of speech and instruction.'

This then was the compromise which the freethinker of the seventeenth century was able to make with the power-State of the seventeenth century—namely that *raison d'état* should constitute a pledge of rational intellectual freedom. But the individualistic motive that lay concealed there now also tinged the aim of the State, which Spinoza laid down in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (ch. 20, § 12): 'In truth, the purpose of the State is freedom'; and this freedom seemed to him to consist in the fact that men should make use of their free reason,

and that mind and body should develop their powers without let or hindrance.

Subsequent experience of life further defined Spinoza's ideas about the State. Thus the *Tractatus politicus* (V, 2) says with a noticeable modification: 'The object of the State is none other than peace and security of life. Consequently the best State is that in which men lead their lives in harmony and where *their rights are continually preserved without injury*.' Thus this definition unites the needs of individuals with the needs of *raison d'état*. And modern thought, too, on the subject of the State is continually striving once again to unite them. But to the modern mind the best State is no longer (as it was for Spinoza and natural right) a realization of universally valid principles, but rather the supreme and most complete realization of a temporary and individual vital principle.

Spinoza offered an approach to Hegel; but he was not quite capable of breaking through the limitations of his century.

CHAPTER NINE

PUFENDORF

THERE was a spell that lay over certain significant ideas, pregnant with meaning for the future, which were already thought of in the seventeenth century. They were not yet able to hatch out properly in the severe climate of that century, they could not yet develop their full productive qualities. It was only Goethe that brought Spinoza completely to life, and German Idealism did the same for Leibniz. The intellectual movement must already have been restricted by the stiff garment of the Latin scholar-tongue; for there is a very close connection between the liveliness of modern cultural and national languages, and the liveliness of modern thought. But the spiritual life of the seventeenth century in general was also stiff, even in comparison with that of the late eighteenth century, softened as this was by idealism and the Enlightenment. At the same time however it was capable of displaying in several of its greatest thinkers that powerful constructive intellectual strength which bears analogy in the political field with the State-forming energy of a Richelieu, a Cromwell or a Great Elector.

This energy was, as we know, nothing else but the practical application of the doctrine of *raison d'état* and State interest. This doctrine too contained hidden seeds, which were not yet able to open out completely in the atmosphere of the seventeenth century. Not only the general doctrine and conception of the nature of the State, but also the writing of history, could have been made to bear fruit much earlier, if those rigid dividing walls, by which the century was still confined, had not existed between the separate provinces of life and thought.

This is shown in a remarkable way by one of the great constructive minds of the century, Samuel v. Pufendorf. One knows his great merits in connection with the general doctrine of the State, as much as with the writing of German history. In both provinces he made a search for principles that sprang from the very nature, the beating heart, of things themselves. His doctrine of the State helped to free the State from the fetters of theological thought. In writing history, he concentrated his attention closely on tracing political events back to the rational motives

of the agent. In what follows it will be shown that he was also fully conversant with the doctrine of *raison d'état* and that of State interest, and indeed that both these questions were in the very forefront of his principal ideas. He might also have had a definite enough intention of letting the three ideas permeate each other and make each other bear fruit. We shall have to follow up carefully all attempts at this kind of reciprocal interaction. But in the last resort it was impossible even for him to surmount the bounds of his century.

His doctrine of the State was rooted in the great discovery made by Bodinus, when he hit upon the concept of State sovereignty. This (as we have heard) is the supreme authority, independent of every other power,[1] and it is, he added, single and indivisible.

This discovery of Bodinus' had been no merely theoretical act; it formed a part of the new *raison d'état*, just as it also did of the doctrine of the concrete interests of the State, and both parts supplemented each other. For unless a sovereign and unified State Will were created and recognized, there could be no unified and effective fostering of the concrete interests, and again without this the new concept of sovereignty would have remained empty and purposeless. But theoretical thought is not always accustomed to paying attention to vital interrelationships of this kind, but on the contrary is very easily inclined to separate off one set of ideas from another and push ahead with each in a one-sided manner. In this way already Bodinus, seduced by a vision of the absolutism which was now growing up, had confused the sovereignty of the State in general with the sovereign rights of its supreme instrument, and had thereby given the concept of sovereignty a rigid form, which made it difficult to conceive how a sovereign State authority could be evolved in States which were not governed in an absolutist manner.

Now it has already been pointed out by Jastrow [2] that the critical judgment passed on the constitution of the German Empire in 1667 by Pufendorf (under the pseudonym of Severinus de Monzambano) was founded, not so much on an examination of its political shortcomings, but in the first instance much more on just this point that it made too strict and stiff an application of that concept of sovereignty. He saw the rights of majesty in the Empire as shared between the

[1] According to the modern theory of sovereignty, it is not actually State authority, but only one attribute of complete State authority. Jellinek, *Allg. Staatslehre*, 2nd ed., p. 459.

[2] *Pufendorfs Lehre von der Monstrosität der Reichsverfassung. Zeitschr. f. preuss. Gesch. u. Landeskunde*, 1882 *und Sonderausgabe*. Cf. also Gierke, *Althusius*, 2nd ed., p. 247. A reprint of the first edition of *Severinus de Monzambano De statu imperii Germanici*, taking into account the final corrected version, was brought out in 1910 by Fr. Salomon; a good translation by H. Bresslau appeared first in 1870, and then in 1922 (in *Klassiker der Politik*, vol. 3) with a very valuable introduction.

Emperor and the Estates, therefore it was not possible for the Empire to be a monarchy, and altogether it could not be a unified State entity. In addition to the unified State he realized the possibility of associations of States, but these could only be of two kinds: either such as were united under one common sovereign, or such as had arisen by means of a union between several States. And since too it was unthinkable that a State should be without sovereignty, it therefore followed from this that such 'State systems' (as he called them) should partake of the nature of international law rather than constitutional law. Or in other words: he did not yet know, and would not have admitted, that in the event of several States being united together, it was also possible for a new State, a chief State, a federal State, to come into being. His doctrine was that it was only possible for a State to embrace several States within itself, if these States all ceased to be States. And since at this time the separate German States had not yet in any way ceased to be States, but rather on the contrary tended more and more to become States completely, he was forced to conclude from this that the German Empire was not a State at all. And since on the other hand it was not possible either to call it a State system (partaking of the nature of international law) he therefore stated that it was then in fact an irregular *corpus* and that it was (as he expressed it very pointedly from the outset) a *monstro simile*.[1] And since any regress towards being a unified monarchic State seemed to him impossible from a practical point of view, or at least only conceivable as a result of violent revolutionary changes, he saw that the only possible path to recovery was for Germany, having once started along the road towards mere State federation, to follow that road consistently to the end. His proposals for reform culminated in the suggestion that the Emperor should be forced to retire into the position of a mere federal chief, and that a permanent federal council drawn from the Estates should be placed at his side, to take decisions on all federal affairs.

But if one looks more closely at these proposals for reform, one notices that Pufendorf becomes involved in a remarkable conflict between his constitutional theory on the one hand, and his political wishes and requirements on the other. A federation of States, of the sort he wanted, could only consist of sovereign States. But then his proposals for reform restricted the sovereignty of the individual States in a manner which, though certainly possible in a federal State, was not possible in

[1] In the edition of 1668 this famous expression is watered down to *tantum non monstro simile*, and was later struck out altogether. But he firmly maintained the irregularity. Cf. Bresslau's translation of *Severinus, Klassiker der Politik*, 3, 28* f. The fact that the expression *regimen monstruosum*, describing the State-form of the Empire, was already used by Bartolo in the fourteenth century, is shown by Koser, *Hist. Zeitschr.*, 96, 196.

a federation of States. Conflicts between member States of the federation would, for example, have to be settled by a verdict of arbitration on the part of disinterested parties, but this verdict of arbitration must if necessary be carried out by force. He even held that outlawry by estates of the realm was not incompatible with the constitution of the federation of States.[1] Later, at the end of his life, when he revised this daring work of his youth, he himself discerned that it was not permissible to exact this kind of diminution of sovereignty from the member States of a federation, and he correspondingly moderated his proposals for reform.[2] Thus in the end his theory became quite consistent throughout—but at the cost of a more correct and vital instinct which had carried him forward at first, but which he had afterwards had to suppress because it disturbed his symmetrical pattern. This instinct had told him quietly, when he was planning his youthful work, that the German Empire was in fact something more than a mere incipient federation of States; it told him that there was there a great political unity, a living individual political organism, which would be bound to require resources of State force for use against its members. It was not the influence of mere patriotic desires, but a sound historical and political intuition that led him into this inconsistency. His rigid doctrine of sovereignty threatened to break up the last vestiges of State unity that were still possessed by the poor German Empire—his sense for the concrete interests of States (we may now say) restored this unity.

For this kind of vital sense, that there did exist real German collective interests such as only a real State could possess, could already be glimpsed in several places in his early work. The closing chapter of Severinus, in which his proposals for reform were unfolded, bore the title *Ratio status imperii* and thereby expressed the idea that in spite of its irregularity the German Empire nevertheless possessed a complex of collective State interests. In this he was following the pattern laid down by Bogislav Chemnitz in his *Hippolithus a Lapide*. But Chemnitz, who conceived of the Empire as an aristocratic community, because that was what he wanted to change it into, had also for this reason adjusted the *raison d'état* of Germany, and sketched it in such a way that it corresponded to his bias.[3] And we saw at the same time that his method of ascertaining the *raison d'état* of Germany was of a generalizing, and not of an individualizing nature. For the *raison d'état* (this was what the doctrine said) directly depended on the State-form. According to how many categories of State-form there were, so there were just the same number of categories of *raison d'état*. If the State-form of a community

[1] Cf. ch. 8, § 4, and ch. 5, § 28.
[2] Demonstrated in detail by Jastrow, *loc. cit.*, p. 72 f.
[3] Bresslau, *loc. cit.*, p. 21*.

had been established and brought into the symmetrical scheme, then its *raison d'état* followed automatically.

Pufendorf also shared this schematic doctrine, which tended to restrict one from taking a particularizing view of State interests. But owing to a remarkable stroke of luck he nevertheless reached a position where he could comprehend the real collective interests of Germany in a much more individual and adequate way than Hippolithus could with his blend of theory and bias. Precisely because he did not consider that the Empire constituted a regular State, he felt himself particularly impelled to study its individual character.[1] But then the picture he drew of German *raison d'état*, of the collective State interests of Germany, was bound to take on characteristics which were more individual and historically more concrete. But how (the question now arises) could his search for a German *raison d'état* be compatible with his doctrine which looked on the Empire, strictly speaking, not as a State at all, but rather as an incipient union of States?

One might object that, according to Pufendorf's view, even a federation of States could have a common *ratio status*.[2] But to this it could be answered that a federation of States, which has to defend permanent common interests of self-preservation abroad and similar interests of freedom at home, does in fact cease to be a mere federation of States and begins to become a federal State, and to develop a super-State over itself which is still only very incompletely and loosely organized. Wherever there exists a characteristic *raison d'état*, wherever special principles and interests of a common political entity assert themselves in a unified and permanent manner, there must also exist a State; it may only be a very incomplete one, retarded in a rudimentary way, or completely decayed, there may be almost nothing left but the spirit of a State, lacking the appropriate body, but there will still exist the need and the tendency to form this body and become a complete State. And this was the case with the German Empire at this time. The tendency to maintain the Empire by fostering the weak remnants of State unity which it still possessed, had not been submerged by that other tendency for the separate German States to develop into real and completely sovereign States. Pufendorf himself had made to it just those inconsistent concessions which for the sake of his theory he later retracted. And in all questions which concerned Germany's relations to foreign countries he naïvely took it for granted that Germany

[1] Acutely observed by Bresslau, *loc. cit.*, p. 32*.

[2] As has been pointed out by Bresslau, *loc. cit.*, p. 41*, Pufendorf, in his book *De republica irregulari* (which appeared in 1669), went so far as to include mere federations of States (*systemata civitatum*) in the class of composite States; but later he tried as far as possible to avoid using the expression *res publica composita* for these, because it was opposed to his basic presupposition that sovereignty was an indispensable characteristic of the State.

constituted a State unity, and he analysed her special interests very perceptively, just as he analysed the counterplay of foreign interests against Germany. 'The power of the German Empire, which, if it were held together by a regular constitution, would inspire fear throughout Europe, is so weakened by internal maladies and upheavals, that it is scarcely able to defend itself.' 'How monstrous', he remarked, 'the very fact is that, in the Empire, the head and the limbs stand opposed to each other like two hostile parties!' [1] His ideal undoubtedly was that Germany's forces should be unified in such a way that they 'would be wielded by one Will, by one spirit'.[2] Basically the federation of States was for him only an inadequate substitute for monarchy, induced by pressure of the situation; it was 'much more readily exposed to internal unrest, indeed even to the danger of complete dissolution'. He bitterly lamented the effects of the federal rights which, by the terms of the Peace of Westphalia, had been expressly allotted to the German estates; for, owing to this, foreign powers were put in the position of being able, by allying themselves with Germans, to keep Germany down and expand their power at the expense of the collective unit.[3] In his ideas for reform for this future federation of States he made a demand, not only for a restriction of this federal right (which would again entail a lessening of sovereignty in the interests of a collective German State), but also for a foreign policy which, without indeed aiming at expansion and conquest, would yet be intended to hinder any of the neighbouring countries from being conquered by a powerful land-hungry enemy which could be dangerous to Germany—that is to say, a policy to maintain the balance of power, and one which would in case of necessity be an actively forward policy.[4] He went on further to consider carefully whether certain coalitions (and if so which) among foreign countries could become dangerous for Germany.[5] He did not estimate this danger as being very great, because Germany would always be able to find allies, since the defeat of Germany would also endanger the freedom of all the other European States. The coalition which seemed to him most serious was the one that had already decided Germany's fate during the Thirty Years War, namely the alliance between France and Sweden. But in this quarter he was perhaps able to find comfort in the information of his brother Esajas, who was a diplomat in the service of Sweden. 'Experienced politicians', he remarked, 'will have perceived that, though France is ready to buy the assistance of Sweden, she wishes to utilize for herself alone the advantages procured by this assistance.' For France was not at all anxious that Swedish power should grow to such an extent that the friendship of France would be unnecessary to Sweden. And Sweden was just as little desirous of seeing

[1] Ch. 7, § 8. [2] Ch. 7, § 7. [3] Ch. 7, § 9.
[4] Ch. 8, § 4. [5] Ch. 7, § 6.

Germany completely defeated by France, because this would also put an end to her own political independence.[1]

Thus we find ourselves here in the midst of one of the most subtle investigations that could be produced by the doctrine of State interests, that of weighing up on the basis of *trutina statuum*, the secret motives, assumptions and limitations of the European alliances. Pufendorf had begun his career as tutor in the house of the Swedish envoy in Copenhagen; and during the years when (as professor in Heidelberg) he wrote *Severinus*, he was also able, on account of his association with the Elector Karl Ludwig, to get an insight into the affairs of imperial policy.[2] His political horizon broadened when, on being invited to Lund in 1668, he was able to gaze at Germany and Europe from the Swedish point of view. Simultaneously he now turned himself into a great theorist of the State, into a keen-sighted expert on the politics of European interests, and into a writer of contemporary history. But the split which had already appeared between theory of the State on the one hand and historical and political thought on the other (a split which we have already perceived in him) remained in existence. His great *Jus naturae et gentium* of 1672 remained firmly fixed within the bounds of the method of natural law, and was incapable of using the insight into the individual interests of States (possessed by Pufendorf in his role of politician) in order to attain a broader insight into the individual and historically peculiar aspect of the separate State-forms. Certainly the idea of *raison d'état*, the universal source from which the special interests of separate States all spring, is heavily stressed. It is made a duty for the ruler to let his own personal life and his private inclinations and interests become wholly and completely swallowed up and incorporated in the interest of the State.[3] And it is also recognized as a wider basis of the doctrine of interest, that agreements between the rulers are only binding so long as they do not prove harmful to the interests of their peoples.[4] But for the historical multiplicity and living strength of these interests, there was no place in his system.

He relegated elsewhere the view he had of it, when he undertook to provide the 'youth of quality', the 'people of rank who were therefore accustomed to arrangements of State', with a piece of armour which was as scholarly as it was worldly, a practical handbook of historical and political knowledge—in the *Introduction to the History of the principal realms and States, as they at present exist in Europe* of 1682.[5]

[1] Concerning the additions to the posthumous edition of *Severinus*, in which his anger against Louis XIV's policy of conquest, and against the German rulers who furthered it, broke out, cf. Bresslau, *loc. cit.*, p. 45*.

[2] Treitschke, *Pufendorf. Histor. u. polit. Aufsätze*, 4, 220.

[3] Bk. VII, ch. 8, § 1–3. [4] Bk. VII, ch. 6, § 14, and ch. 9, § 5.

[5] We should also mention briefly here two other similar attempts to repeat the project of Rohan, and furnish a doctrine of the interests of separate States. Petrus

Such a combination of learning, worldliness and practical politics was in itself completely in sympathy with the seventeenth century, which was fond of work on a massive scale and prized academic honour even in a statesman. But the question arises whether this combination was also successful in itself. In respect of the doctrine of interest and the general doctrine of the State, this combination had not been properly successful. Was it perhaps more successful now in respect of the doctrine of interest and the writing of history?

The attempt to combine together history, information about States and peoples, and the doctrine of interest, is certainly a remarkable one. But the material offered by world history was considered exclusively in terms of the separate States; for, since the decay of the mediaeval ideas about the unity of the Christian Western world, historical thought had not yet become broad enough to present the actual historical unity of this world in new forms adapted to the fact itself. The account of each separate State usually consists of three successive sections; the first and longest of these deals with the history, the second treats of the condition of the people and the country and also the form of government, and the third then goes on to treat the interests of its foreign policy. It now became evident that the new doctrine of interest was just as incapable of being combined with traditional historical knowledge, as it had been with the general doctrine of the State. For in the historical sections there prevails throughout an uncritical and helpless repetition of the raw material, while the closing sections reveal the full mastery of the political observer, and are basically richer in real historical understanding than the preceding historical parts.

Pufendorf called the doctrine of interest 'the foundation from which one must set out, to judge whether something in State affairs is done well or badly'.[1] And precisely for the reason that for him it consisted of a purely practical body of knowledge, it was not yet capable of

Valckenier, a Dutchman living in Frankfurt-on-Main, in Part 1 of his great work of contemporary history *Das verwirrte Europa* (German edition, Amsterdam, 1677) treated 'the universal and special State-interest of every ruler and republic in Europe'. His approach was Dutch, anti-French and conservative, from the point of view of the Orange party; and he also had the interesting tendency to consider the importance of economic forces in the play of political interests. I have dealt with his theory in the *Gedächtnisschrift für G. v. Below, Aus Politik und Geschichte* (1928), pp. 146 ff. Then in 1681, the electoral counsellor of Saxony, Christian Widmann, describes in his *Academia Status* the interests of the different European States. He shows knowledge of the world and some capability of political judgment. A full analysis of the work of Widmann is given by Kunkel in the manuscript of his book on *raison d'état* and publicism in the seventeenth century.—A work which already appeared in 1666: *Intérêts et maximes des Princes et des Estats souverains* is not really a theory of interests, but rather a collection of the various pretensions and territorial claims, etc., which the different States made against one another.

[1] Preface to the *Einleitung zu der Historie usw.*

permeating his historical knowledge of the past. But his theoretical ability, which was even greater than his historical ability, was capable of drawing the first basic outlines of a systematic formulation of the doctrine of interest, and of laying down the various categories of interests. He divided these into those that were imaginary and those that were true. Amongst the imaginary ones he included the aims of an exaggerated and unhealthily ambitious power-policy, 'under which heading one can place *Monarchiam Europae, universale Monopolium etc.*, which is the tinder that can plunge the whole world into *Combustion*'. One sees here again (as in all the earlier instances) that the doctrine of interest is born of a sentiment of self-protection and is fostered principally by those who saw that all States had a supreme interest in maintaining a situation of free co-existence, of a reasonable balance of power between the European States. The true type of interest was correctly divided by Pufendorf into a permanent kind and a temporary kind. 'The former usually results from the situation and condition of the country, or from the natural inclination of the people; the latter however results from the character, strength and weakness of the neighbouring countries, any change in which will give rise also to an alteration in one's interest.' So it may happen that today perhaps we may give a helping hand to a weak neighbour, whereas tomorrow, if the same neighbour should become dangerous or vexatious to us, we may have to turn against him. He then went on to pose the great and ever-recurrent question, which had already been suggested in Rohan: namely the question of how it could happen then that interests, which were yet of an obvious nature and were at least capable of being known to the statesmen participating, were so often misconstrued and wrongly treated. Like Rohan, the only answer he could give to this was the superficial one: that either the rulers themselves were often not fully informed or did not allow themselves to be advised by wise and faithful ministers, or else that the ministers were incapable, or were not sufficiently disinterested and objective. It needed a more profound historical approach than this period was capable of, in order to understand that the very interests themselves were occasionally dualistic by nature and could force one to choose between Scylla and Charybdis, and that the mistakes of the individual in recognizing his own true interest are often only the outcome of the forces of fate. But Pufendorf was already on the right track in thinking that any application of the doctrine of interest also demanded a precise knowledge of the personalities acting from time to time in the various States, and that this 'knowledge, as it had to do with them, and thus with external affairs of State, was highly necessary, while at the same time it was, as it were, *momentanea* and variable'.

Out of his treatment of the separate State interests, we shall select the

one which he had already included for treatment in his early work. This was the *ratio status* of Germany; it was certainly the one which had occupied him most, seeing that throughout all the changes in his own personal interests his own feelings had always been profoundly German.

He was now able to grasp it more freely and (from a historical point of view) more profoundly than had been possible in his early work which had been so restricted by the dogmas of constitutional law. In that early work he had already pointed out the unnatural duality that existed in the organic life of the German State; and the fact that the interests of the Emperor and the Princes were so basically different. Now he remarked even more concisely and forcefully than before that, amongst the German princes, there had arisen a small number of the more powerful ones, who 'act almost entirely *en Souverain*, and are desirous of framing for themselves their own *raison d'Estat*'. One can see already from this observation that he was still just as sceptical as ever about the possibility of improving German relations. But on this occasion his attempt to explain the evil led him to a historical perception which sprang entirely from the spirit of the doctrine of interest. In the event of 1519, the imperial election of Charles V, he saw already the fatal turning-point of German history. It was, on his analysis, altogether opposed to the German interest that Charles should be chosen. For the ruler who has succeeded to a hereditary kingdom, and is then chosen to rule an elective kingdom, will either be indolent in his management of the latter, or will make the interest of the elective kingdom dependent on that of the hereditary kingdom, or else he will strive to bring the elective kingdom under his yoke and make it an appendage of the hereditary kingdom. Germany had suffered all these three things under the rule of Charles V. 'He never allowed his plans to be governed by the true interest of Germany, but on the contrary everything was done with a view to the special majesty and power of his own House.' If at that time Germany had had an emperor who possessed little or nothing else besides, then the true interest of the Empire would have suggested to him that he should not be dependent on either of the two powerful nations of France or Spain, but should take up his position in between them as an arbiter, and take care that neither of them gained any advantage that might be detrimental to Germany. It would also have been in the interest of Germany (as he had already observed previously in *Severinus* [1]) to free herself from the Pope, and confiscate the possessions of the Church. If at that time the Emperor had lent a helping hand, it could have been done as easily as in Sweden, England and Denmark. But his Spanish interest had forced on him an anti-Protestant policy. It is afterwards shown in a masterly manner, in the

[1] Ch. 8, § 7.

section dealing with the Papacy,[1] how since then the Emperor, *par raison d'état*, had been quite unable to tear himself free from the Papacy, even if he had wanted to. For the lords spiritual in the Empire had been forced into supporting him, in order to have a backing against the lords temporal. And moreover the Emperor, if he wished to free himself from the Pope, would not be able to count on the assistance of the lords temporal either, because now the old Houses would claim that they were just as entitled to the imperial honours as Austria was. Also France would then make a bid for the imperial throne, and perhaps many of the clergy would throw themselves into her arms.

Thus, as Pufendorf acutely and profoundly recognized, the religious cleavage in Germany was now being maintained by an inexorable pressure of real political interests. And this cleavage continually tended to produce fresh political division and weakness, because at this time the question of Church possessions was still (as Pufendorf asserted) tearing asunder the Catholic and Protestant principalities. Equally, too, he observed the continued injurious effect resulting from the Spanish principles of the House of Hapsburg. Besides an unutterable amount of other misery, these principles had also produced the result that the principalities, in order to keep their freedom, had been forced to depend on foreign powers. It was inescapably clear to him that the German Protestants (even if they were led by Brandenburg) could have no hope of opposing the Emperor by their own strength alone without the help of Sweden and France. Germany remained stuck fast in a deadlock, and her own true interest was powerless under the pressure of those other interests which resulted from the combination of the imperial election of 1519 and the state of religious disunity. This pessimistic general conclusion was the same as that which he had already drawn in *Severinus*; but its final effect was now even more shattering, because this time it had not been reached by dogmatic methods, but on the contrary by the historical method of causal analysis implied in the doctrine of interest.

But this element of pessimistic scepticism was also closely connected with the spirit of the doctrine of interest, as it was held at that time, and with the mathematical and mechanical character which was attributed to the various interests. There was no escape here once the net of interests had closed; there was no belief in any profounder forces of development in the nation, in living seeds for the future, or in fresh historical patterns of an organic kind, by means of which the fatal spell that lay over Germany might possibly, even at some future date, be broken. The belief in the inexorable pressure of interests was only mitigated and supplemented by a belief in the variability of human

[1] Specially published by Thomasius under the title of *Politische Betrachtung der geistlichen Monarchie des Stuhls zu Rom mit Anmerkungen*, 1714.

affairs in general, and in the luck of the bold gambler, who knows how to make use of the trumps skilfully and shrewdly in the game of interests. 'For it often happens', says Pufendorf, 'that a State which is weak in itself may receive *Consideration* on account of the *Valeur* and good *Conduite* of its rulers: and equally often, too, the unskilfulness of the rulers will cause a great and strong State to appear *la beste*.' But which of the contemporary rulers that Pufendorf's doctrine of interest was dealing with ought to have found any personal interest in exerting his strength on behalf of Germany as a whole and restoring the *Ratio status* of Germany?

Thus it came about that Pufendorf, when he took up the task of writing contemporary history, restricted his aim. It was not yet capable of entering his mind to show the way in which the interests of the States and their personal representatives were interwoven with the collective existence of culture and the State; rather, on the contrary, his method of writing history was, and could not be anything else but, an application of the doctrine of interest. This is the character of his great works, two of which, *De rebus suecicis ab expeditione Gustavi Adolphi in Germaniam ad abdicationem usque Christianae* and *De rebus a Carolo Gustavo Sueciae rege gestis*, were written by him between 1677 and 1688, when he worked as Swedish historiographer; the remaining two, *De rebus gestis Friderici Wilhelmi Magni electoris Brandenburgici* and the fragment *De rebus gestis Friderici III*, were written between 1688 and his death in 1694, in his capacity as historiographer for Brandenburg.

The connection between the writing of history and the doctrine of interest is therefore much closer in these works than in the historical parts of his Introduction to History. So the question now arises as to the degree in which the historical view, at least, of the past that is fresh in one's experience was capable of being permeated by the great idea implicit in the doctrine of interest: the great idea that every State possesses its own vital artery and has the path that it must tread fixed for it by its original character and the state of events; and to what extent also the experiences of statecraft were capable of causing historical thought to bear fruit.

One must begin by considering the conception that Pufendorf had of the task of writing history—or, to speak more precisely, the conception he had of *his* task of writing history. It was not indeed in the capacity of free scientific observer and investigator that he wrote his great works; on the contrary, he was executing a commission, today for the Swedish king, tomorrow for the Elector of Brandenburg, and those that commissioned him were expecting him to produce a monument to their fame. From the very outset, this restricted the flow of his historical writing. But he nevertheless believed that he would be able to unite, in a pure and scientific manner, the more elevated duties of a

historian with the baser duty of his official commission. Let us hear first of all the words of his preface to the work *De rebus suecicis*.

'In this work moreover we have (as is the principal duty of the historian) tried very conscientiously to ensure reliability; we have taken the decisions (*consilia*) from the authentic documents and interpolated nothing, and our portrayal of events is based on the reports of army commanders and envoys. In general we have not troubled to present the decisions and actions of the enemy party, except in so far as these entered the field of view (as it were) of our own side. We considered it rash to try and divine or interpret their secrets by conjecture. Altogether, we have given the reader freedom of judgment, without introducing our own opinion unnecessarily. Our intention was to relate the deeds of others, and not to pass judgment on them. As will be clearly seen, I have restrained my emotions to the extent that I need fear no reproach from any who at that time fought against Sweden in a political or military capacity. But should they be displeased with a few of the things that I have made public, and which they feel would be better forgotten, then they must realize that rulers are born subject to law, and that their fine deeds as well as their evil ones are bound under any circumstances to come to the knowledge of many. And History does not hesitate on the basis of its right (*suo jure*) to transmit what it has found for the consideration of posterity, whose free criticism cannot be eluded by any ruler, even though he may have acted rightly. . . . Most of all it is required of the historian that he should say nothing false and should not refrain from saying anything true.'

We are not concerned here with scrupulously ascertaining whether and to what extent Pufendorf abided by his promise not to gloss over or touch up anything out of a sense of opportunism. He confessed himself that, in his history of Charles X, he exercised 'moderation' with respect to Brandenburg; and he was certainly subject to a number of human frailties in the way of toning down and omitting facts.[1] But on the whole he faithfully carried out his principle. It is an important and interesting fact, however, that he drew a fundamental distinction between the task of a writer of contemporary history, who should refrain from moral judgments, but should collect and hand on all possible material on which they can be based, and on the other hand, posterity's task of passing a moral judgment,[2] which can however only be properly exercised by a retrospective historical account. In the process, he was fundamentally disturbed indeed by the grave and diffi-

[1] Cf. Salzer, *Übertritt des Grossen Kurfürsten von der schwedischen auf die polnische Seite* . . . in *Pufendorfs Karl Gustav und Friedrich Wilhelm*, 1904, and Ridding, *Pufendorf als Historiker und Politiker* in *Commentarii de reb. gest. Friederici III*, 1912.

[2] So too at the end of the preface to the *Geschichte des Grossen Kurfürsten*.

cult question, of how one could combine historical objectivity and coolness with an independent value-judgment about historical events. But the intellectual resources of his time were not yet adequate for a combination of this kind. He himself may have felt this obscurely, as for instance when, on the occasion of once personally attempting such a retrospective historical account in his *Introduction to the history of the principal realms and States*, he did not succeed in passing beyond a fairly primitive and conventional treatment of the material. But he understood very clearly that any attempt to present contemporary history, and pass a moral judgment on it at the same time, was beset with all the dangers of subjective partiality. On the other hand, in his role of contemporary historian, he was filled with the proud ambition, not to relapse either into singing the panegyric praises of whoever happened to be commissioning him, or into being a mere collector of materials. And he was now convinced that it was also perfectly possible—in spite of the fact that a contemporary historian felt himself obliged to refrain from passing moral judgments—to carry out a genuine form of historical work of the highest kind. It was his intention (as it later was Ranke's) to obliterate himself and cause only the facts themselves to appear—but not a crude mass of facts, rather on the contrary, facts that had been selected, ordered, and inspired with a definite and higher principle. Thus he strove after a real historical objectivity, even in his role of official historian.

Already Sleidan, in a similar situation, when he was writing a contemporary history of the Schmalkaldic League, had striven after the same goal.[1] The historian, he had said, ought to show *veritas* and *candor*. *Veritas* he had found to lie in using the most reliable sources for material, namely documents—and Pufendorf found the same. And (again agreeing almost word for word with Pufendorf) he found *candor* to consist in repressing one's emotions, and avoiding any tendentious writing. Accordingly he set in opposition to one another the various writings and counter-writings of the parties, taking excerpts from them more or less skilfully, and only considered himself justified in 'accommodating the style' in order to achieve a uniform literary production. A sense for which were the best sources, and an ability to repress one's own emotions, were certainly the two great permanent virtues of the historian, which Sleidan and Pufendorf strove to realize. But the objectivity achieved by Sleidan was only primitive and involuntary; it was solely produced by copying. He had not yet come to know the ideal of an objectivity attainable by means of one's own intellectual effort, an objectivity to be attained through personally cultivating one's own powers of thought by suppressing one's emotions, an objectivity which to a certain extent rested on a refined subjectivity. The intellectual bond

[1] Preface to the Commentaries *de statu religionis et reipublicae Carolo V. Caesare.*

which united together the chunks of raw material amassed by him was (even in spite of the formal humanist style) only the irrepressible Protestant conviction of the author.

But Pufendorf, in his treatment of contemporary history, went an appreciable step further than Sleidan towards achieving historical objectivity. And he accomplished this, because his century provided him with the doctrine of State interests as a principle that was capable of animating events and the raw material. The interest of rulers and States was the very spirit of their actions; it was the impersonal power, entirely free from emotion, which directed them and forced them to suppress their own emotions in the service of *raison d'état*. The course of political events itself, if one paid attention to this principle that was immanent in them, took on to a certain extent a quite objective character, an inner logic and inevitability, a purely mathematical structure, such as the thinkers of the seventeenth century were so anxious to find in every province of life and of the world. But the writer of contemporary history who reproduced this rule of *raison d'état* on the basis of its own direct and personal productions, the documents, was thereby enabled to reach (in a worthy and satisfying manner) a type of knowledge which was free from bias and emotion. He was now able, in fact he was now obliged to renounce his own personal judgment, and nevertheless still remained at the highest peak of his task. He could believe that he was offering something equivalent to the physicist and the mathematician—even if he was only presenting the *raison d'état* of the master that paid him, in its historical perspective. In order to repulse his personal enemies, Pufendorf was not afraid of invoking the proverb that 'He who pays the piper calls the tune', and that it is not the fault of the scribe if the sentiments expressed are those of the master.[1] And he did not intend this in a subordinate and strict ethical sense, but in an ethical sense that recognized higher laws of public life over and above the ethic of private life. And these laws had for him precisely that same dual significance that the concept of law still has today. On the one hand they were norms, duties, *officia* for politicians; on the other hand they were causal factors of occurrence, whose force could not in general be escaped by the individual. As evidence of this interpretation we may quote the letter which he wrote from Berlin on 5th March 1690 to the Imperial Councillor v. Seilern.[2] Whilst his manuscript on Charles X was at that time still lying unprinted in Sweden, and whilst he was still working on the documents of the Great Elector in the palace at Berlin, he agreed to a request of the Emperor to write the history of the Turkish War afterwards. It was not possible,

[1] To Paul v. Fuchs, 19th Jan. 1688. Varrentrapp, *Briefe von Pufendorf, Histor. Zeitschr.*, 70, 27 f.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, 41 ff.

he argued, to assume that he had any prejudice against the Imperial House from the mere fact that he had once presented the Swedish policy in opposition to the Emperor. For friendships and alliances between rulers very frequently changed in accordance with the times; and it amounted to a duty for private persons to follow the rulers they served, even into their enmities against others. But especially too the historian, who is not giving his own judgment, but is only acting as an advocate for the actions and for the prejudices of this or that ruler or State whose history is being recounted—this historian cannot do otherwise than reproduce the views (*sense exprimere*) of his principal. Rulers and States did not judge their own actions solely according to common law; on the contrary, in the first instance they followed the special interests of their State (*peculiares status sui rationes*). And since these often differed extremely and were even in opposition, it could happen that each belligerent might wish to have the appearance of right on his side, but that yet after the end of the struggle both parties might look upon the justice of their cause as equivalent.[1] And so it could happen that the history of two opposed rulers might be written in the same way, whereby the authors adapted themselves to the opinions, interpretations and interests of their own rulers. Indeed, provided he had the skill, it was possible for one and the same historian to do this, since the task of a historian was very different from that of a judge or advocate. Thus it was to be hoped that posterity would one day judge in this way that he had written the history of two such enemy rulers as Charles X and Frederick William in such a manner that the views of Sweden and Brandenburg were correctly expressed in the proper places.

Consequently interest, *raison d'état*, not only exerted an influence on the rulers, but also on the writers of contemporary history. The contemporary historian must interpret State interest in a pure and loyal manner, without any partisanship or any judgment being passed. Provided merely that from time to time he carries out this duty exactly, he may enter today in the service of this, and tomorrow of that *raison d'état* —just as it was possible at that time for diplomats, officers and officials to change their ruler without inviting the reproach of lack of character. We have already pointed out earlier on that the mechanical character of the doctrine of interest facilitated just such a swift change of viewpoint, and at the same time also held a number of serious temptations for adventurers. But, as Pufendorf's words indicate, a more profound justification was also possible. The services of the separate rulers and States (in which the rulers, just like their servants, became functionaries of the separate individual State-ideas) appeared to contemporaries as definite, higher, supra-personal forms of life; and even if these life-forms

[1] *Inde contigit, ut uterque inter se bellantium justitiam a se stare videri velit, et ubi armorum satietas est, uterque quantum ad justitiam causae pro aequali habeatur.*

attempted to uphold their right against each other by force, yet in the last resort, when the weapons were laid aside, they looked upon each other once again as equally justified. Thus they stood together in a hostile-friendly relationship of contrast, similarity, and a higher community of right which united them. And whoever served one day this *raison d'état* and the next another, was really serving (Pufendorf did not say this, but he certainly felt it) the world-reason, which demanded that the interests of States should be separate, but also demanded that everyone should do his duty in the position he occupied, and therefore could not disapprove a change of situation, because the service of every State and ruler was essentially equivalent to every other.

But the superior legal community, within which the different States and State interests could exist side by side as equivalent members, could be none other than the ancient community of the Western Christian peoples. As we already noticed with Rohan, the heart of the mediaeval conception of the *corpus christianum* had long been scooped away, but there still remained as it were a framework for it. And when the Turkish terror swept through Christendom, there had once more been revived even in the seventeenth century the old hankering towards a general Christian solidarity. Then the Christian ideology opposed itself to the real interest of the separate State, calling upon it to subordinate itself to the universal Christian interest, and condemning it harshly when it stood apart or (as was indeed the case with France) tried to make common cause with the hereditary enemy of Christendom. The real policy of the cabinet was not indeed essentially influenced by this ideology, but it was still capable of being used as a moral auxiliary by imperial policy and by all the opponents of the French policy of aggrandizement. It was to these that Pufendorf belonged. The very thing that attracted him to the task of recounting the Turkish Wars of the Emperor, was the fact that here for once (he wrote) he had to present a great action which was backed by the feeling of the whole of Christendom (with the exception of the profligate French); whereas in the presentation of other wars it was scarcely possible to introduce enough moderation into one's words and views to prevent someone from taking offence. Thus it was not possible for this most skilful and loyal historian of State interest to become absorbed in his task, and he began to feel the need for a higher point of union to bridge the division of interests.

In his case (as with his contemporaries) this need was still bound by tradition, even if it was only a tradition that was dying. The first steps towards a more modern community-idea which would no longer be Christian, but rather would have a secular tinge, towards the idea of a legal and cultural community of the Western peoples, had already been made by him (as we observed), and had been forcefully worked out by

him and by Grotius in terms of State theory and the law of nations. But they were still far from attaining an organic picture of the collective Western life of peoples and States, in which the cleavage of the individual State interests would be represented just as forcibly as the cultural and legal interests which united them, and in which every separate splitting-off of interests would at the same time appear as a vital process of the whole European body politic. Thus Pufendorf's description of the history of interests remained stuck fast in a one-sided rigidity. He produced only monographs, when what one wanted were biographies of the separate isolated State interests; for these latter were only capable of being understood completely when the motives and interests of the opponents, and indeed the universal European connections, were made perfectly evident. Pufendorf contented himself with saying (as we have seen) only what he found in the documents of his State, and considered it unmethodical to mention what was not to be found there. He was perhaps right to renounce something which neither he nor his period were ready for. The limitations which he himself set to his own writing of history were indeed the limitations of his century. The grandiose one-sidedness with which it forced the idea of *raison d'état* into the life of the individual States, was indeed also obliged to reflect itself in a kindred writing of history.

Other one-sidednesses in Pufendorf's writing of history were also connected with this. Droysen, who exhibited something of Pufendorf's one-sidedness, has pointed them out with a certain affinity of feeling.[1] One is first impressed, but afterwards also wearied by Pufendorf's abstract and impersonal mode of writing. The purely human element evaporates to a certain extent among the facts, i.e. in the play and counterplay of interests. Even the groupings inside the court itself, the struggles between the different statesmen of the same ruler to influence his policy—these struggles do to a certain extent become impersonal. Names are seldom mentioned; the individual and local details of consultations are obliterated, in order that solely the *rationes* themselves should emerge clearly. In the process Pufendorf employed a very striking historiographic device, to a certain extent a more genuine (and yet not completely genuine) substitute for the invented speeches with which the ancient and even the humanist historians embellished their work and simultaneously filled the need for reflection, for a free survey of the motives of things. In his Swedish, and also in his Brandenburg works, he frequently speaks of a *consultatio*, *consideratio* or *deliberatio* in the council of the ruler, as offering starting-points for new series of developments. Then he advances the reasons and counter-reasons for the Swedish or Brandenburgian State interest in a distinct manner—but not always based on the documentary background of the real

[1] Cf. Droysen, *Abhandlungen*, pp. 358 and 368.

protocol, on the contrary usually freely put together from different reports, instructions and opinions.[1] These are architectonically stylized pictures of the deliberations in counsel, and are made intelligible only by the stylistic principle of this mode of writing history, which is purely and exclusively that of working out the development of *raison d'état* in the variegated interplay of the concrete interests.

But how one-sided this *raison d'état* was in its own conception is shown by the fact that the historian concentrated almost solely on developing it externally, and not on presenting its internal development; whereas only both together could offer a complete picture. The contemporary theoretical treatment of *raison d'état* in Germany was guilty of a similar but opposite disproportion, in that (in accordance with the tradition taken over from Italy) it laid the chief emphasis on the securing of the internal power-situation of the ruler. But it was just as incapable as Pufendorf was of achieving a really vital picture of what was going on inside the German territorial State. Pufendorf says practically nothing about the domestic State reforms of the Great Elector, about the building up of the army and about the changes and innovations these led to in the administration and finances; and one hears far too little about the struggles with the Third Estate and about the very important mercantile needs and aims of his policy.[2] The convention still was that none of these things offered any worthy subject for the writing of great history. But even the doctrine of the interests of States (which was not bound by convention, and had sprung directly from the needs of policy) did not—as we saw in the case of Rohan—trouble itself nearly enough about the organic connection between foreign interests and the internal life of States. Much of importance was happening within; the internal interests of the States were no less active than the foreign interests. And the leading statesmen and reporting diplomats (despite the greater distinction of 'Foreign Affairs' [3]) paid great, if not always proportionate, attention to domestic affairs, as is shown by the political testaments of Richelieu and the Great Elector, the Venetian Relations and the *Relation de la cour de France* in 1690 by the Brandenburg envoy Ezechiel Spanheim. Thus there was indeed no lack of vital connection between the domestic and foreign life of the State in general; it was merely that a full consciousness of the sig-

[1] So far this has only been proved (by Droysen) to be true of the historical work on the Great Elector. Yet it is permissible to suppose that the same applies to the corresponding parts of the works on Swedish history.

[2] Cf. Droysen, *loc. cit.*, 336 ff.; Ritter, *Entwicklung der Geschichtswissenschaft*, p. 203.

[3] *Cose forestiere*, says a Venetian, are *elevate materie che veramente si chiamano di stato*. Annemarie v. Schleinitz, *Staatsauffassung und Menschendarstellung der Venezianer in den Relationen des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Rostock Dissertation, 1921 (unpublished).

nificance of such a connection was lacking. Hence arose this lack in the doctrine of interest, and in Pufendorf's mode of writing history which was based on it. Once again we become aware of the limitations of the century. But Pufendorf's writing of history had a monumental quality and a purity of style which were worthy of it.

CHAPTER TEN

COURTILZ DE SANDRAS

AMONGST those intellectual forces which tended during the seventeenth century to relax the dogmatic spirit with its belief in absolute truths, it is no longer possible to overlook the doctrine of interest and the genuinely politico-historical mode of thought for which it prepared the way. The doctrine of interest, by accepting as a supremely natural impulse the egotistical right that each State possessed to look at the European community of States with its *own* eyes and re-fashion it according to its *own* needs, led directly towards Relativism. There were now just so many intellectual views of the European power-relations, as there were European States with separate political interests; and the political intelligence that wished to weigh these up found itself obliged (even if it might in the process generally also be guided by its own wishes) to concentrate on judging the various pictures purely empirically and without prejudice according to the same standard, i.e. according to the standard of the forces that were actually in operation. Looked at more deeply and closely, it was the genuine European development itself, with its juxtaposition of free and independent States, that was eventually bound to produce this Relativism—for the doctrine of interest was only a reflex of it. But events do in fact constantly operate only through the medium of reflexes, ideas and intellectual habits of this kind, and it is to a great extent this that always assures the shaping and effective force of intellect.

The Relativism inherent in the doctrine of interest was capable of developing more freely, the freer the observer himself was from political wishes and interests of his own. The first French representatives of the doctrine of interest,[1] from a position firmly based on the interests of their own State and nation, had surveyed the interests of other nations and allowed their situation to colour their point of view; whereas Pufendorf, as he wandered from court to court, made his observations and judgments from a variable base, but held firmly and conscientiously in the process to the interest of whoever happened to be his master at

[1] And also the Dutchman, Valckenier, mentioned above on p. 230, n. 5.

the time. Thus his treatment remained firm and flexible at the same time, and never lacked character within the temporary situation. But now we must also examine a specimen of the wavering type of Relativism which was able to gain ground during the age of Louis XIV. This was an imitator of Rohan,[1] the author of the book *Nouveaux interets des Princes de l'Europe, où l'on traite des Maximes qu'ils doivent observer pour se maintenir dans leurs Etats, et pour empêcher qu'il ne se forme une Monarchie Universelle. A Cologne, chez Pierre Marteau 1685.*

The anonymous author, who pretended that his book had been brought out by the well-known fictitious firm at Cologne (actually it was published at the Hague), was Gatien des Courtilz de Sandras, a political and literary adventurer of enormous fertility and agility, who lived from 1644 to 1712.[2] After being discharged from French military service he began first by publishing in Holland in 1683 a work complaining bitterly against the French policy after the Peace of Nimwegen; then (possibly in order to procure a remission of his sins) he published an equally energetic refutation of his own pamphlet. It went on much the same right through his whole life: military and political writings, forgeries of memoirs and political testaments followed one after the other. Even in the Bastille, where he languished from 1693–9 and again from 1702–11, his pen does not seem to have been idle. In the meantime he managed to exist in Paris like any other poor devil, getting his wife, his brother and his sister-in-law to peddle his books in the bookshops and houses. But he had readers throughout the whole European world. He was the founder of the *Mercure historique et politique* (1686), the first real political monthly review, with its epoch-making arrangement of combining political news with independent observations. And his books were read by the youthful nobility in Germany and Poland, by the ladies in Stockholm and Copenhagen. There now existed an international public that showed a consuming interest in the secrets of courts and States. Even his *Nouveaux interets* went into three editions, and called forth from Pierre Bayle the laudatory remark, that here was a real man of intellect discussing the special interests of every nation, and doing his job very well. And indeed the man's achievement is substantial enough to make it worth our attention. However reluctant and sceptical we may be about using it as a source for historical events, it nevertheless provides instructive evidence of a widespread political mentality of that period, and of a political virtuosity which was brought into prominence by the power-policy of Louis XIV and was now living out its days in naïve security; at the same time however it also already

[1] References to Rohan on pp. 53, 81, 105, 309, 312.

[2] Cf. the careful research by H. Runge (1887) concerning him and the *Mercure historique et politique* which he founded in 1686; for the most part, indeed, it establishes only the external literary dates.

gave some signs of the new disruptive elements which were destined to destroy the system of Louis XIV.

'For a certainty, nothing is so delightful as politics,' Courtilz remarked on one occasion; and this passionate joy in his own handiwork already does something to reconcile one's feelings towards him. His pen might be for sale; but his pleasure in the problems of political calculation which he set himself was quite genuine, and one cannot mistake his perfect readiness to work out for every separate potentate a special formula of interest which suited that particular ruler. Thus, in spite of all his lack of conscience, he did possess a certain quantum of factual seriousness. Fundamentally, in the process, it might well be the case that his heart was really all for the glory and greatness of France and 'Louis le Grand'; and the manner in which he was able to combine it with his role of adventurer, was revealed by Courtilz himself in an effusion on the subject of the spy's calling.[1] In earlier days, a gentleman would have felt some scruples in acting as a spy; but today, whether it was that no one troubled any longer about the manner in which a fortune was made, or whether it was that the honour of serving a Louis XIV was so great that what had previously been infamous now became glorious—in any case, there were few Frenchmen living who would not have been delighted to receive such commissions. Fugitive and outlawed duellists, even fugitive Protestants offered themselves for the task. A remarkable proof of the national solidarity of the French nation, which had now been achieved!

With the same naïve frankness, he was also capable of approving the methods of bribery which played such a great part in the statecraft of Louis XIV and his contemporaries. This was part of policy, and policy was 'the secret of furthering one's own affairs, and hindering others from furthering theirs'.[2] His sordidness of mind was also revealed by the fact that he enormously exaggerated the political effects of dispensing gold. It was his opinion that, if the niggardly Emperor Leopold had given the Turks sufficient money, the Turkish War would never have broken out, and Louis XIV would never have captured Strassburg and Luxemburg.[3] Besides money, another principal method used in contemporary statecraft was that of royal marriages—a subject on which his judgment was more subtle and sure. Marriage alliances between rulers of equal power, he observed, are weak; but those made between rulers of unequal power are strong. Politicians had not under-

[1] Pp. 209 ff. [2] P. 143.

[3] P. 145. Nevertheless Courtilz here confuses somewhat the order of events. The capture of Strassburg took place in 1681, that of Luxemburg dragged out from 1681–4, but the Turkish War first broke out in 1683. The exaggeration of the effects of diplomatic corruption is dealt with extremely well by Fester, *Zur Kritik der Berliner Berichte Rébenacs, Histor. Zeitschr.*, 92, 25 ff.

stood why the Emperor, instead of giving his daughter in marriage to the son of King John Sobieski of Poland, had married her to the Prince of Bavaria. With the former she would have been better looked after; but, when arranging marriages, rulers were not in the habit of concerning themselves with this point, for their children 'are usually the sacrificial victims, whom they slaughter for the sake of their interests'.[1]

He was only repeating what had long become a universal maxim when he asserted that a ruler should not bind himself a slave to his own word, in a case where the interest of his own State hung in the balance. But at the same time it was not generally considered respectable to declare oneself bluntly for Machiavelli. Even Courtilz considered it proper to make reference to the Christian limitations to which power-policy was subject, and to distinguish between a policy of interest and one of prestige. It was permissible to break alliances in order to protect oneself from suffering an essential loss, but not solely in order to achieve greatness. He found it understandable that the Dutch, during the War of Devolution, should break their alliance with France in order to prevent her from making further conquests; but he also praised Louis XIV for not having made use of the opportunity presented by the Turkish War, of taking a short cut towards the goal of a universal monarchy which danced before his eyes.[2] For the boundless caprice of a conqueror was only permissible for rulers who did not live under the laws of Christendom.

It is doubtful whether Courtilz himself had any great faith in this. For an unscrupulous political relativism predominates throughout his work. 'There does not exist a single maxim that may not have to be reversed in accordance with the circumstances. Everything must yield to interest of State.' Nor is there any resentment, when it is a question of political interests. At the same time he also knew that State interests were in themselves capable of being dualistic, and often resembled a pathway between two abysses. It was clear to him that Holland, for the sake of her very existence, could not concede the conquest of Flanders by France. Since the proper time had not yet arrived to oppose France, Holland must prepare and arm herself for it; but, again, in doing so, Holland must show a prudent mistrust of the monarchic designs of William of Orange—without however carrying this mistrust too far, for fear of coming to grief in some other direction. In short, 'there are always two sides to every question'.[3]

'The policy of rulers must remain firm, but at the same time it must continue to change with the alteration of events.'[4] Rohan had already been aware of this; but since his time an appreciation of the fluid character of policy had become all the more significant on account of the enormous shift in power-relations within a few centuries. Who would

[1] P. 155. [2] P. 3 f. [3] Pp. 319 ff. and 375. [4] P. 347.

have thought it possible earlier on that Spain and the Netherlands would now have to link together so closely in order to ward off the overwhelming pressure of France? And now too, for a mind thinking in purely political terms, all questions of religious bias had become out-of-date and untimely. The policy of interest became one of the most effective educative influences towards a policy of tolerance. Courtilz had a very disdainful opinion of the policy of the Emperor who had not yet freed himself from Catholic zeal. 'Today it is no longer a question of enticing the nations by affecting a false zeal, but much rather of making their situation and their happiness secure.' [1] A new note in statecraft was being sounded here; the primacy of material interests and the idea of making the subject people happy (both of them things which the eighteenth century would introduce) were heralded here. Even in Rohan's time the real power-interests had begun to reduce the oppositions produced by creed, and alliances between rulers of different confessions had become possible. But in spite of this the cloak of religion still continued to be considered an effective measure to be used in statecraft. But the struggle which Courtilz carried on against the use of religion as a pretext, was a struggle against an iceberg that was already melting. He ridiculed the superstitions of earlier centuries, the fanatical French priests of his time who saw in the Catholic religion a *primum mobile*, setting in motion all the stars and planets, and who imagined that Louis XIV, by suppressing the French Protestants, could pave the way for himself to world domination. I, on the contrary (he went on), with my view of world politics, say that, for the plan this great monarch has conceived of becoming Emperor of the West, no more fallacious means could have been chosen than this which has now been adopted, for it offends the Protestant States.[2] Soon after the appearance of his book there followed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and Courtilz proved right in the end with his prophecy that, with this act, Louis XIV would be committing a great mistake and an injury against his own interests. It would be wrong to suppose that there was in him any tendency towards Huguenotism. He was capable of throwing out the idea that, if one only wanted to have one religion in the universal monarchy that was to be established, then it would be possible to compose an intermediate religion out of the Protestant and Catholic creeds—one which would prune away all the chicanery and controversy of the Huguenots and Papists. This reminds one of the dreams of a man like Leibniz, but at the same time it was also an anticipation of the illusions of a rationalism that would come in time. But with extraordinary acuteness the enlightened politician simultaneously foretold too the bad effects which the policy of suppression (inaugurated by Louis XIV) was to have on the internal life of France.

[1] P. 19. [2] Pp. 188 ff.

'It will create Tartuffes, hypocrites and disbelievers, so that his kingdom will become the kingdom and the republic of atheists.' He issued a warning reminder of the fate of Spain and Italy, where a lazy clergy indicated the character of the country; and he pointed to the economic and cultural achievements of the reformed clerics, on whom the flourishing period of France was founded.

Here there began to dawn a deeper understanding of the national bases and presuppositions for all politics of interest. But it is in the natural course of the development of things that more profound insights of this kind, which have been attained on one single point of experience, are capable of long remaining isolated, and of failing for a long time to penetrate the ruling mode of thought as a whole. And this mode of thought (of which Courtilz was a typical representative) was still continuing to deal in politics only with rulers and ministers and their power apparatus and governmental devices, and not with whole nations and States. Moreover it was a reflection of the conditions that were still ruling or predominant. The internal life of States and nations on the greater part of the continent was, now that the feudal and aristocratic resistance of the nobility had been broken, much more tranquil and controlled than before; and, at the time when Courtilz wrote, Absolutism was already almost at its height. This was essentially due to the great struggles for power with other countries, into which the superfluous energies and ambitions of the nobility had been absorbed and diverted. Courtilz also knew and asserted quite openly that it was necessary for the King of France to occupy the natural energies of his subjects by means of wars of conquest, and to purge the country from time to time of its superfluous elements. In order to have internal peace, a 'martial spirit' against the enemies of the State had to be fostered amongst the subjects.[1] Now both had been achieved in France—obedience inside the country, and warlike strength through the achievement of all power-interests. It was impossible (as Courtilz noted in his treatment of the Imperial interests [2]) for the Emperor to hope for internal dissensions in France so long as Louis XIV should reign. It was certainly possible for a few malcontents to start a rising in Bordeaux during the recent war, and one or two cities in Brittany might revolt, but what was the significance of that? 'The *canaille* are not capable of engineering any change. When the nobility holds itself aloof, the people can do nothing by itself; and very often they will fail even when they act in concert.'

Thus Courtilz' doctrine of interest—and, one might even say, the older doctrine of interest in general—certainly did not concern itself with the nations in themselves, nearly so much as with the methods of ruling them and making them into useful tools of princely ambition.

[1] P. 186 f. [2] P. 127 f.

Internal obedience and external power-policy were considered for this purpose (as we have just seen once again) both as reciprocal means and ends. This even seemed completely self-evident to a politically minded and interested contemporary such as Courtilz, and his interest was consequently confined to the pleasure of contemplation, to a shrewd understanding of this mechanism of means and ends in the policy of interest. With great acuteness he perceived the relationship which the monarchy in France bore to the upper and lower classes in the community. The king (he asserted [1]) relies on the support of the people against the nobility. In any conflicts between the *seigneur* and his feudal community, the decision is generally given in favour of the latter; for the nobles are incapable of achieving anything without the people, and therefore they have to be kept in a state of disunity, and thus the *intendants* are the sworn enemies of the nobility. But on the other hand 'it is a paltry business if a king is reduced to placing all his hopes on the common people; and it seems to us to constitute the glory of a king, to be always surrounded by a devoted nobility, as the King of France is'. The latter understood too how to compensate and satisfy the nobility. So this already provides one with a sketch for the classic picture which Tocqueville was later to paint of the *ancien régime*.

It was on this basis that the following picture rose before him of the European interest-policy of France: plenty of loyalty on the part of native subjects, plenty of treachery on the part of alien subjects, the Emperor occupied with the Turkish War, England and Holland disunited in themselves, Spain pitifully weakened, and in addition a host of small and powerless rulers in Europe—it was the highest point of Louis XIV's power and of his hopes for the future which Courtilz had to grasp in the year 1685, and which he understood with as brilliant a degree of acuteness as a contemporary is ever capable of.

The king is placed like Jupiter above the other gods. It would appear (so Courtilz judged) as if no one today could stand against him, and as if he would attain the goal of universal monarchy, provided he took the right steps; but this was just the mystery, what step to take next. He had been faced with two courses. The first was the safer, but less honourable of the two, and had therefore not been adopted by him: namely, to march straight on Vienna, whilst it was besieged by the Turks, and let the imperial dignity be conferred upon him. Perhaps he now regretted not having adopted this course, since the other, which he had chosen instead, was much less safe and might produce changes in Europe which would render it impracticable for him. This second course was to let himself be elected emperor by means of the customary formalities. Once he had chosen this course, he had to strive to make himself feared by the electoral princes, which was to be achieved by

[1] P. 341 f.

maintaining his armaments—but to be feared in a manner that would evoke admiration and not terror. In addition he would also have to win their friendship by the solid advantages which he would procure for them, and ultimately he would also have to bring into play all the other small methods of statecraft.

Here Courtilz recognized correctly that the year 1683, the time of the siege of Vienna, would be decisive in showing whether Louis XIV had the makings of a conqueror on the grand scale.[1] He was not made of such stuff; in view of the fact that his national resources were not inexhaustible, he restricted his immediate aim to conquests that he could make without striking a blow, and to the Reunions, the recognition of which he wanted to secure from the Empire by friendly means. In Courtilz' opinion, the king, in order to conceal his real aim which was the dignity of emperor, would have to make believe that he desired nothing for himself except the Rhine frontier. But it was precisely the Rhine frontier which was at that time his real aim; [2] and his wish to become emperor was a velleity, which, though it might engage his imagination, could not seriously occupy his realistic policy. Thus the political sense of the gifted publicist was not yet schooled to a sufficient degree of subtlety to ask himself the question, whether something which one might feel to be within the reach of the Sun-King's ambition, might also actually be the leading idea in his policy. But this mistake of exaggerating the tendencies of a forcefully growing world-power is one that is still constantly being made, and it cannot be counted as a shortcoming in the historical outlook of the doctrine of interest of that time. It arises from the nature of things, from the fluid character of all desires and from the objective possibilities which are capable of furthering it or holding it back. Courtilz and his contemporaries were certainly correct in attributing to Louis XIV designs which might be capable of influencing and guiding his policy, if not indeed today, then at least tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. 'It is in the essence of great powers,' he had said once already, reminding one of a well-known phrase of Ranke's, 'that they should want everything to bow down to them.' [3]

And in spite of the doubtful character of many of Courtilz' calculations about the interests of the different powers, this sense for the essence and significance of the great powers was something that distinguished him. According to him the minor rulers also possess a certain significance, in that, if they understand their own interest correctly, they will help the weaker of the great powers against the stronger in order to maintain a balance, without thereby closing the door to other courses

[1] Cf. Fehling, *Frankreich und Brandenburg in den Jahren 1679–1684*, p. 239.

[2] Platzhoff, *Ludwig XIV, das Kaisertum und die europäische Krisis von 1683. Hist. Zeitschr.*, 121, 398, and Fester, *loc. cit.*, p. 41.

[3] P. 38.

of action; but generally speaking they are only exploited, and they would do well to make up any differences among themselves, in order not to be robbed by the great powers.[1] Against the threatened universal monarchy of France, a power like Venice could indeed provide a desirable, but in no way essential, ally. According to his trenchant judgment there only existed three powers in Europe which could seriously oppose the King of France: the Emperor, England and Holland.[2] In his opinion the Emperor had acted correctly in establishing his main front against the West, instead of against the East—but at the same time he was certainly wrong in assuming that peace with the Turks could be bought at any price, and he was incapable of the long view which would foresee a continuance of the Turkish War for the House of Austria. His own glance was more sharply directed towards the West than towards the East, and it was there that he struck right to the heart of future events. For (such was his opinion) there was no power of whom France should take greater care than of England and her seapower. England might easily assume the role played earlier by Spain, and not only act as a counterpoise against France, but even disrupt the balance of power. Today it was no longer in England's interest (he observed with real subtlety) to adopt a genuine policy of war and conquest, but rather on the contrary to maintain her power in trade and at sea, and for this it was sufficient to become the *Arbiter* of the other powers.[3] In these ideas he did not allow himself to be confused by the superficial appearance presented by contemporary England, under the semi-Catholic government of James II, with its struggles between king and parliament. In this situation (he said) France must naturally reinforce King James, thereby fostering the religious opposition in England; but this measure might have doubtful consequences, since if England became Catholic it would also win back its political unity. In order that England might remain in her situation of political disunity, he wisely advised the King of France to check the commercial rivalry with England in order that the threat to English commercial interests should not bring king and people together once again. It was all the easier for him to give this advice, since he was a staunch opponent of Colbertian Mercantilism, and an advocate of ideas of free trade which already had a physiocratic tinge. Colbert's policy would lead to conflicts with England and Holland; and if these States were united, their maritime supremacy would be capable of ruining French trade.[4] His advice struck at the root of the deep and dangerous dualism which beset French

[1] Pp. 26 ff., 31 ff., 39.

[2] P. 203. He does in fact say *Empire*, but he generally means the Emperor.

[3] Pp. 309 ff.

[4] Pp. 184 ff., 228. His stay in Holland, and the influence of the environment there, certainly explain his dislike for the Colbertian system.

power-policy after the time of Louis XIV: namely, that France wanted simultaneously to pursue continental and maritime power-aims without always being able to pursue them simultaneously. Courtilz was also convinced that the supreme degree of power and glory did include sea-power; but he was right to warn France against forcing the conflict for it and bringing down upon herself the united navies of England and Holland. It is significant that he sensed the growing danger to which Louis XIV afterwards succumbed in the War of the Spanish Succession.

The unavoidable and imminent struggle for the Spanish inheritance was also bound to occupy seriously the thoughts of Courtilz. He cannot be reproached with handling this, which was at that time the most important problem for the future of Europe, in terms that were one-sidedly French. Here too (as the sporting element in the doctrine of interest demanded) he was concerned to think himself into the opposing points of view; and he did so, on this as on other occasions, with a distinct cool-headedness, which makes one imagine that he also envisaged, behind and above the interests of the rival great powers, the interest of Europe as a whole. This European interest demanded that neither France nor the House of Austria should be the sole heirs to the bulk of Spanish territory. Courtilz was now indeed assuming it to be self-evident that universal monarchy was the definite aim of Louis XIV, and if the opportunity for it were not taken now, it would not return for another century. Hence he also felt himself tempted to explore the possible way in which the entire Spanish inheritance might be won; but here again, as in the question of English-French opposition, he counselled moderation and holding back.

Finally he also weighed up, with a remarkably good historical instinct, the interest which the Emperor had in the Spanish inheritance. He might quite simply treat his son-in-law, the Electoral Prince Max Emanuel of Bavaria, as heir presumptive to the House of Spain, thus diverting the latter's ambition from the goal of the imperial crown; for he could rely on it that, as Spanish heir, Max Emanuel would have to keep on good terms with the Emperor in order to secure his inheritance. This was equivalent, then, to maintaining in the future the Spanish-Hapsburg dyarchy. If in the past this had constituted a great danger for the independence and freedom of the rest of Europe, then now it was a rampart which protected the whole continent from being subjected to the will of France. Courtilz knew very well that no danger of universal monarchy was to be apprehended any longer from the Emperor, nor indeed from Spain. Hence a continued community of interest between the two had no more than a defensive significance.[1] In this connection it is interesting to note his opinion that the Emperor had boldly dropped the cloak of Catholic interest with which he had

[1] Passages on the question of the Spanish succession, pp. 236 ff., 261 ff., 271, 288.

formerly concealed his policy of universal monarchy, and had thus been enabled to gather the Protestant States around him. So the same policy by which France had once forced Charles V from the summit of his power might now perform the same miracle to achieve the downfall of Louis XIV.[1] Here too Courtilz showed once again his sense for the historical future. The grouping of powers in the War of the Spanish Succession bore out his prophecy. It was Prince Eugene who, against the pious ladies and father confessors of the Hofburg, defended and helped to carry through the Emperor's policy of alliance with the Protestant maritime powers.

Such judgments will perhaps cause one, in the future, to look with some sympathy on the doubtful man of honour. It is also an excellent characteristic in him that he paid an equal attention to the Eastern and Western, to the Northern and the Southern groups of European States; and that he freed himself from the preference (which, already in Rohan's time, had become somewhat conventional) for the Southern and Western groups, and for the artificial construction of small Italian States. This may not perhaps be thought to bring him any special credit, because the importance of the Northern and Eastern States obtruded itself unavoidably, after first the Thirty Years War and the Northern Wars, and then the conscious play of French policy had produced a continuous circulation of the blood of political life amongst all the European States (with the sole exception still of Russia). Sweden, Poland and Turkey formed the outer ring of French alliances and *ententes*, serving to a certain extent as a camouflage for France, and hindering and causing anxiety to the Empire and the Emperor. In the place of Sweden (which, since the Peace of Nimwegen and the Reunions, had freed itself from France), Denmark and Brandenburg had, in the first half of the 'eighties, taken over the role of being camouflaged bastions of France. As recompense for this they hoped to obtain France's permission and assistance in falling upon Sweden and taking from her the territories they coveted. But now something remarkable occurred: France refused this permission, although Sweden was now in the enemy camp. France refused, because the Swedish-French community of interest, welded together by the work of the Peace of Westphalia, unexpectedly persisted even during this period of alienation between France and Sweden. It was one of the most instructive complications of the European policy of interest; and it does honour once again to Courtilz' acute insight that he by no means entirely failed to perceive it. France will not tolerate (so he asserted) that Sweden should be plundered by her neighbours; for if they won what they covet, there would be a danger that they would turn to other interests, i.e. that they would fall away from France once again. 'So they must be kept continually in

[1] P. 166.

hopes', but yet without letting these hopes be fulfilled; and the very art of having an alliance was to arrange things in such a way, that one's own advantage profited by it and the advantage of the other was so small that no jealousy was aroused by it. This was precisely the policy which France was at that time pursuing in the face of the passionate struggles of the Great Elector to pounce upon Sweden.[1] He also recognized quite clearly that Sweden no longer had sufficient power to maintain the position which Gustavus Adolphus had won; consequently she was urgently impelled to seek the aid of France against her chief enemies, Brandenburg and Denmark. But in general the King of Sweden was obliged to behave as rulers do who are not secure in their own State, that is to say, obliged to avoid war.[2]

He also gave the same advice to the German Imperial Princes, although, or precisely because, he fully appreciated the way they were endangered by France's policy of expansion. All the German rulers were treated by him only collectively; so that the historian's wish to hear the opinion of so wise a contemporary about the growing power and widely ramifying interests of Brandenburg, is doomed to remain unfulfilled. An old-fashioned element of conventionality is present in this collective view of the German Imperial Princes. Thus they were still looked upon from abroad, as a Milky Way of small and tiny powers; and the customary view was that their general interest lay in liberty. Their special individual impulses did not arouse much interest, because the individuality and power of the separate member-States did not yet stand out as fully enough developed. Here Courtilz causes one to regret the absence of that acute sense for coming events which he revealed in his treatment of the great world relationships.

And although his field of view was already a collective European one, yet his actual mode of observation was still not yet collectively historical in the modern sense. In working out the separate interests and tendencies of the various different powers, he created for himself his own interest. It is a collection of monographs, dealing solely with the subject of what the separate States were obliged to do; it still did not offer any analysis of what this individual activity would produce in the way of collective developmental tendencies. Only on one occasion were we able to suppose that he was guided by a sense for Europe as a whole. And just as the more ultimate background of the individual States tended to be obscured by the examples of their policy used for calculation, so also did the universal background of the European community of States tend to disappear too. But indeed this was also the case in historical reality at that time. In a zealous and mistrustful manner, each separate State attempted to secure its own safety in the face of the menacing

[1] P. 363 f. Cf. the book by Fehling already referred to, and Fester, *loc. cit.*, p. 36.
[2] Pp. 343 ff.

bogey of the French universal monarchy. The collective spirit of Europe was not dead, but the anxiety for individual existence prevented it from rising to full consciousness. But then at the turn of the century important new power-struggles which were to shake the whole of Europe, and also new intellectual ideals would eventually prepare a foundation for a more universal conception of the doctrine of interest.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ROUSSET

IN many respects the War of the Spanish Succession was a prologue to the great upheavals and renewals which Europe was to experience a hundred years later. On both occasions it was a question of getting rid of power-relationships which were antiquated and lifeless but which up to then had always been clung to, and of making room for the newly-risen forces in the collective life of Europe to develop. The upheaval of the revolutionary period affected the entire political and intellectual existence of the nations; but that of the early eighteenth century only affected a part of each of these, for Europe was not yet ready for a wholesale renovation. The completely antiquated and senile system of the Spanish-Hapsburg collective power and dyarchy, which had been founded by Charles V and Ferdinand I, was successfully overthrown. The single pillar of this system was broken up altogether into its parts; and the Spanish power-complex, which had embraced Spain, Belgium, Milan and South Italy, was dissolved. This was an extraordinarily meaningful event, for the first mighty blow was thereby given to the historical tradition with regard to the shaping of European power and territorial relationships. Hitherto, generally speaking, only separate provinces and countries had been lost and won in the struggles between powers. But now there fell a whole system, a great empire of a universalist character. And the neighbouring countries hitherto ruled by it were abandoned to changing and uncertain fates, because their new possessors had in no sense won them entirely by their own strength, and did not hold them with all the firmness of an age-old possession. In addition the principal heir, Austria, was soon threatened with a fate similar to that of her sister power Spain, namely that the dying out of the male line should cause her to break up into pieces. Thus grew in strength that trait of insecurity and fluctuation, which was so fundamental a characteristic of the European system of States. A swift winning and losing and exchanging of countries arose. This gave a powerful stimulus to political ambitions; and they would have gone much further than hitherto, and would even have effected quite different

upheavals from those which they actually achieved in the two decades following the War of the Spanish Succession, if the physical State-resources behind them had been stronger, and if it had not been that a moderating and restricting influence was exerted by the two strongest powers in Europe—France and England.

For although they themselves were rivals, they nevertheless hesitated, after the sacrifices of the recent war, to deploy their full strength, and both wanted to maintain the European peace for as long as possible. The unrest in Southern Europe, which proceeded from the dynastic ambition of the new Spanish Bourbon dynasty, therefore led only to relatively restricted, and not to really great European crises and wars. And the War of the Polish Succession from 1733 to 1735, in which France once more opposed the House of Austria, ended with an astonishing compromise by the two antagonists, whereby once again a classic role was played by the exchange of territory and a transfer of dynasty. The War of the Spanish Succession itself had been led up to by those celebrated negotiations over the partition of the Spanish territory, in which the rival great powers had attempted by compromise (and without any agonizing concern for hereditary rights) to settle peaceably the partition of the countries, and thereby not only ensure the balance of power in general, but also satisfy each separate great power in its own special interests. After the War of the Spanish Succession this attempt was made once again by the policy of the so-called Quadruple Alliance, and the Congresses of Cambrai (1724–5) and Soissons (1728). Moreover a completely new political idea which arose during this period was that of discovering a resultant of forces, a collective European Will, which would not indeed belong to the totality of European States and nations, but would represent solely the dictates of the great powers as against the medium and smaller powers. Elements of power-egoism and pacificism, of Europeanism and particularism, were thereby consolidated into one. Whereas hitherto Europe had fallen into two conflicting camps, one of which reproached the other with an evil desire towards universal monarchy, connecting links were now created tending to produce a unified oligarchic organization of the European State system—links which were admittedly so weak that every extra strain put on them by the special interests of the leading great powers was likely to break them again.

'*Convenance*' was the name of this new principle upon which the leading powers attempted to regulate Europe. The 'sublime rights of *Convenance*' were talked of. But the political writer who coined this word, Jean Rousset, showed at the same time by the use he made of it that he meant something ambiguous by it. If anyone today (he wrote in 1735 [1]) is astonished by the great change in all European power-rela-

[1] *Mercure histor. et polit.*, vol. 98, 20 (1735).

tionships since 1702, then he does not know 'the great and magnificent prerogatives of the sublime *droit de convenance*—a right against which everyone inveighs, and yet which everyone uses to cloak his own actions; certain States were obliged to hinder the adoption of this right, and yet they make their true interests give place to it, if not in the present, then at least certainly in the future'. Another assertion of his shows that the idea of expediency was also ambiguous in itself. France coveted the Southern part of the Netherlands, and even had an old, and perhaps justified, feudal claim on it. But this was of no consequence, for the *droit de convenance* of the whole of Europe was against it; in just the same way it could not tolerate that the English and Dutch should drive the Spaniards out of America, and France and the Italian States would not suffer the Emperor to take possession of Venice and Switzerland. It is needless for France to raise the cry of injustice, for has she not herself in a thousand instances given an example of the force of the rights of *convenance*? Has she any better right than this to Brittany, Normandy and Acquitania, or to Alsace, the Franche Comté and the principality of Orange? [1] Thus expediency was not merely, as has certainly been said,[2] an expression for the common, mutually arranged power-interests of a European oligarchy; it could also designate simply the naked power-interest of a single power, unsupported by any legitimate right, and thus it tended to pass over into what was denoted by the expression *droit de bienséance* in the time of Frederick the Great.[3] It was meant for a single power, the Turks, when Rousset spoke of a *violent système de convenance*, which was incapable of keeping faith in treaties.[4] And even the expediency of the united great powers by no means always served him as an expression for the collective interests of Europe, even if these were frequently invoked in order to conceal their basically egotistical actions. 'It appears', he once wrote in his *Mercure historique et politique*,[5] 'that the celebrated partition treaties of the beginning of this century, and the *droit de convenance* which has

[1] Rousset, *Les intérêts présens et les prétentions des puissances de l'Europe*, 3rd edition, 1, 533 (1741).

[2] Thus Herre, *Völkergemeinschaftsidee und Interessenpolitik in den letzten Jahrhunderten. Festgabe für Gerhard Seeliger*, p. 199, and also Koser, *Staat und Gesellschaft zur Höhezeit des Absolutismus. Kultur der Gegenwart*, 2, V, 1, p. 262.

[3] Yet the expression *droit de bienséance* also appeared already in the later seventeenth century, e.g. in Dumey's edition of G. Naudé's *Coups d'état*, p. 178.

[4] *Mercure hist. et polit.*, 1737, vol. 103, p. 80. I may also add, as a further evidence of this linguistic use, a passage from the *Avertissement* to vol. XI of his *Recueil* (1736). He is here defending the arrangement of his work on the interests of the powers: *Je traite de la politique et des intérêts de chaque Etat abstractivement et comme si je ne devois traiter que de ce seul Etat; dans un autre chapitre je traite de même de la politique des intérêts d'un autre Etat, suivant les maximes et la convenance de cet Etat et comme si je n'avois traité d'aucun autre.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 582.

since then been adopted in international law, have made it the fashion in Europe to alter the outline of the States in accordance with the *convenance* of the most powerful, which could soon amount once again to the weaker ones being swallowed up.'

But who desired to differentiate sharply between these ideas and the interests and feelings that lay behind them, or to separate out minutely the appearance in them from the reality? A real genuine communal feeling for Europe and the wise interest of a particular State came to be mingled imperceptibly in a man like William of Orange—and not in him alone. At no time did anyone act from purely European feelings. They could only enter in a situation where they harmonized with the special interest, and it was this last that was bound to be fundamental in all circumstances.

Two things, however, were important and decisive for the continued development of the political mode of thought and of the doctrine of the interests of States. First of all, a blow was thereby struck at legitimacy, at historical tradition and at positive law. It was certainly already being taught during the seventeenth century, that *raison d'état* was superior to positive law. But at that time this doctrine was in fact directed more against that form of positive law within the States which stood in the way of their power-development, rather than against that form which one State—or, to be more precise, one dynasty—held against another. In practice, of course, even this latter form has often enough been infringed during the first two centuries of modern history; but, in the process, some attempt had generally been made to clothe the naked power-interest in some kind of statutory legal title, and often the statutory legal title formed the basis of a power-interest, which would never have existed without it. This was how it remained too throughout the whole of the eighteenth century. But with the policy of expediency, in the form in which it came in with the treaties for partitioning the Spanish inheritance, there grew up in political life a new and quite unhistorical type of right. This took its place by the side of (and, if necessary, in opposition to) the positive law and historical tradition, and invoked the notion of a European *salus publica*; and even when it shrank to a mere *droit de bienséance* of a single power, it still honoured itself with the sounding epithet 'right'. State interest, the old *raison d'état*, had put on a new mask, which was still not always a mere mask, because occasionally at least it was inspired by genuine interests for Europe as a whole.

The right of expediency is thus a remarkable variation of natural right. And just as the latter, after the beginning of the eighteenth century, received a new boost from Rationalism and the movement of the Enlightenment, so also there is an unmistakable rationalist element in the policy of expediency. The rational insight of the leading powers

gave rise to the claim to be allowed to partition Europe in accordance with the needs of its happiness and welfare. And since the Rationalism of the early eighteenth century still thought along very aristocratic and absolutist lines, it is also quite understandable that no one hit upon the idea of asking the populations concerned what their wishes were. It was also felt to be a completely rationalist idea, that what was expedient for the State should be described as a 'right', as *droit de bienséance*.

But, as we have noticed, the spirit of *raison d'état* still continued to remain alive underneath the new ideology. Machiavelli experienced a new triumph in the manner in which the iron hand of State interest now drew on a velvet glove. But the basic Machiavellian notion was now combined in a marvellous way with completely anti-Machiavellian ideas. On the one hand the Congresses of Cambrai and Soisssons attempted to set up a European tribunal, and Cardinal Fleury announced at Soissons in 1728 that it was important 'to smooth out all conflicting interests and avoid anything that could lead to a breach'; [1] whilst at the same time the pacifist ideas of the Abbé St. Pierre were influencing the European public, which was taking up once again the idea of a league of nations that had been advocated by Campanella and the Duke of Sully. It is certainly to be supposed that the diplomats of the great powers, when they asserted the tendency to world peace implied by their congresses and interventions, also wanted to pay their respects to the fashionable ideas of the Abbé St. Pierre. But it is more important to realize that even they—however wide the gulf was that separated their oligarchic Areopagus from the league of nations dreamed of by St. Pierre—were guided by a need for peace that proceeded from their own most essential interests. The commercial interest encouraged a peaceful mood. In Western Europe the War of the Spanish Succession was followed by periods in which there was a great increase of trade, which applied particularly to territory overseas, and tended rather to be favoured than obstructed by the famous crises and excesses of the fever for speculation in France and England. England made use of all the gains which she had won from Spain during the war, in order to exploit Spanish America from a commercial point of view. France brought her trade with the Levant into a prosperous state; moreover she was able to compete successfully with the English carrying-trade and demand lower freight charges, because her sailors lived more plainly than the English.[2] And anger over the economic exploitation that Spain was forced to suffer from England contributed essentially to the fact that after 1732 there grew up a common interest between the two Bourbon courts in Paris and Madrid, by which French trade benefited once

[1] Droysen, *Abhandlungen*, p. 211; Rousset, *Recueil*, 5, 176.

[2] On this point, Bielfeld (*Institutions politiques*, 3, 89) is very informative.

again. Thus new tensions and occasions for war of a colonial character began to develop between England and France. But Cardinal Fleury and Walpole both knew very well how much this period of peace helped their nations to acquire wealth; and they acted accordingly.

In this way the policy of interest of the leading great powers did, in general, take on more modern characteristics. The continental power-relationships (which, owing to the dissolution of the Spanish hegemony, had become more fluid) were treated by them in a spirit tinged with a more modern type of rationalism; moreover their interest in the material strengthening of their internal power began to acquire a modern character. It is no longer a question of the mercantilism of Colbert's period (which still strikes one as being somewhat short-winded); this tried chiefly to develop the productive forces of the State by means of authoritarian tutelage and a policy of restriction. The spirit of enterprise shown among the middle classes of the nations themselves becomes more alive and active; it makes use of the opportunities created by war and policy, accepts the benevolent protection of the governments and is carried abroad. But in addition to these more modern characteristics (which showed themselves pre-eminently in the two great powers bordering on the ocean, England and France) the traditional traits of the previous policy of interest continued to live on amongst the medium and smaller powers in Europe. On the classic ground for the foundation of 'new principalities' in the style of Machiavelli—in Italy —there sprang up fresh dynastic formations, which resulted from the ambition of Elisabeth Farnese for her sons. It was certainly due to the influence of her policy that the part of former Spanish Italy which had fallen to Austria was reduced; and the Italian State-system thereby acquired somewhat more of a national character. But the motives which impelled this proud and energetic princess were still absolutely redolent of the political spirit of the Renaissance and the Baroque period.

A completely different type of 'new principality' grew up meanwhile in the east of Europe, on account of the work of Peter the Great and Frederick William I. In fact there was much in common between the thoughts and actions of these two rulers, but there were wide differences in what they produced. To begin with, Russian statecraft had to struggle up from a very primitive level, and after Peter's death it suffered from the retrograde semi-barbarism of the populace and the insecurity of the dynastic court relationships. In Prussia on the other hand there came to be formed (though at first imperceptibly) a new and altogether fruitful soil for the intellectual sphere of *raison d'état*.

Once again we look for the mirror of a contemporary view of this varied and irreconcilable world which, together with the alteration in the moving political forces, will simultaneously reveal the change in

the political spirit inherent there. The decades between the Wars of the Spanish and Austrian Successions, which lacked any great historical advance, also failed to produce any first-class mind to comprehend their *raison d'état* and State interests. At the beginning of this period Professor Nikolaus Hieronymus Gundling of Halle, in a *Kollegium über den jetzigen Zustand von Europa* which he delivered in 1712, took up once again the tradition that Pufendorf had started with his *Einleitung zu der Historie der vornehmsten Reiche und Staaten*, and introduced his listeners to the interests and national forces of the European powers. He did this in the fresh and bold manner which Thomasius had made natural in Halle, and with the self-consciousness of the incipient Enlightenment. 'A *bon sens* supplies everything one desires,'[1] he observed in reply to the reproach that he was lecturing on the gazettes. From the summary of his lectures (which he published somewhat ostentatiously) one can certainly see that, since the time of Pufendorf, a very strong sense had grown up for the connection between political and economic interests, that it was no longer considered possible to treat one in isolation from the other. Colbert, he judged, had benefited France even more than the two cardinals. The War of the Spanish Succession and the entry of the two maritime nations into the power-struggles on the continent had opened up new horizons to him, and had taught him that 'no one could understand the world of the complete inter-relatedness of Europe without a knowledge of the trade and manufacture of Holland and England'. This was no bad teaching for the future civil servants of Frederick the Great who were sitting at his feet. But he appears not to have gone beyond a somewhat superficial mode of observation which sought out in a purely mechanical and statistical manner all the calculable resources of power.

Twenty years after him there appeared a notable political writer with a richer and more fertile picture of the European State interests. This was Jean Rousset (1686–1762), a French refugee who lived in Holland, and from 1724 onwards edited the *Mercure historique et politique* which has been founded by Courtilz. He displayed great activity in producing collected editions of contemporary works,[2] monographs and brochures, and is of interest to us on account of his great work, *Les intérêts présens et les prétentions des puissances de l'Europe*. This appeared first in 1733 in two parts; the third edition in 1741 was in three large volumes.[3]

The bulk of the contents we may ignore, for this comprised the

[1] *Kollegium über die Friedenstraktate*, which he delivered in 1714.

[2] The best-known of all is his *Recueil historique d'actes, négociations et traités depuis la paix d'Utrecht etc.* More details about Rousset are given by Droysen, *Gesch. der preuss. Politik*, IV, 4, pp. 11 ff. Cf. also Koser, *Preuss. Staatsschriften aus der Regierungszeit König Friedrichs*, II, 1, xlv.

[3] The text of those sections in the 3rd edition which interest us, merely reproduces (apart from a few additions) that of the 1st edition.

prétentions which different States had to other territories, and the historical legal titles they possessed for these—a monstrous baroque compendium full of marvellous and antiquated things. And yet, what was so antiquated about this, when one thinks of the Merovingian documents that were dug up by the *Chambres de réunions* of Louis XIV? It was customary for each State to keep just such a treasury of old claims in its archives, so that they could be revived if the occasion arose. Never to forget anything which might come in useful was the answer, even still in this period, when the free *droit de convenance* was beginning to inundate the tenacious and never undisputed right of privileges, treaties of succession, etc. It is characteristic of the whole of the *ancien régime* which was ending, that both rights were made use of side by side, and that whenever possible *convenance* was cloaked with documentary claims of an expedient nature.

Here we are concerned only with the sections dealing with the *intérêts*, which Rousset wrote in conscious imitation of the patterns provided by Rohan and Courtilz. He was not unacquainted with the older political literature, with Machiavelli, Boccalini, Paolo Sarpi, Amelot de la Houssaye, etc., and he had a masterly grasp of the history of his time.[1] As a business-man who lived by his pen and sold his reviews to the courts that wanted to have them, he certainly wanted his advice to be agreeable, and also took good care in his *Intérêts* not to say things that would give offence in the different courts. This was not so difficult in practice, because whoever treated the interests of the different courts one after the other was able to satirize them by imitating the most different voices, and because all the courts now mutually conceded to each other an unprejudiced State egoism. Nor did Rousset fail to provide plenty of good advice for the most different courts, even if this was occasionally somewhat impracticable and unreal. For example, he advised the crowns of Sweden and Denmark, as members of the Empire, to take up the matter of Protestantism forcefully at the meetings of the Reichstag, since they could then become just as influential in the Empire as Prussia and Hanover-England were. He was forgetting that this influence was based on power, and that mere activity without power was of no importance.

But his advice shows that he also had feelings and ideals of his own. Frequently he acknowledged his Protestant standpoint, though not with Calvinist sentiments, but on the contrary moderated by the new intellectual realm of tolerance which surrounded him in Holland, and which already bore a character that was as much one of natural right as it was utilitarian. 'Is there anything more inseparable from the natural

[1] It was generally accepted then that the Dutch journalists and publicists were the best-informed in the world. Cf., regarding the excellence of Rousset's information, Paul-Dubois, *Frédéric le Grand d'aprés sa correspondence politique*, p. 185.

freedom of Man and more in accordance with the law of nature and of nations, than to be able to serve God according to the dictates of one's conscience?' [1] Indeed, when he was attacked for making such statements, he even let fall that phrase, so pregnant for the future, about 'the rights and freedoms of Man'.[2] It was the universal judgment of the century of the Enlightenment which he pronounced, when he upbraided once again the Catholic courts of Southern Europe for the retrograde political character of their intolerance. 'A State derives unspeakable advantages from tolerance and freedom of conscience'; one had only to look at fortunate Britain and the equally blessed Netherlands, with their riches and their teeming populations which dwelt together in the most perfect unity. It would be a decision worthy of a great Catholic ruler to introduce this kind of tolerance into his State, whereby Catholicism could remain the dominant religion. It was only necessary to desire it, for *Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis*.[3]

There was indeed a strong absolutist ring about this. He went even further, described kings as being born priests of their peoples and (as Bodin, Bossuet and Fénélon had also done before him) likenesses of God on Earth);[4] and with this combination of strongly emphasized State religion and tolerance he showed that stage in the development of the relationship between State and Church which later received its classic illustration in the State of Frederick the Great. And yet his own political ideals did not come anywhere near Absolutism. He rejoiced at the aristocratic change in the constitution which was introduced in Sweden in 1719.[5] For in a despotic régime the sole rule was the *sic volo sic jubeo*, the *bon plaisir* of the ruler; whereas in a mixed constitution, and wherever the monarchy rested on aristocracy and democracy, it was the welfare of the State and the greatest advantage of the subjects, the ensuring of public order and the furthering of trade, that constituted the goal of all regulations. He wished that the parliaments in France had greater rights; and he also declared that the English Revolution of 1688 was altogether right in creating a mutual obligation between ruler and people, any infringement of which would dissolve the bond between them.[6] At the same time he nevertheless went on to concede that a strong despotic hand would really have been more capable of leading Sweden out of the ruin left behind by Charles XII than an aristocratic régime, whose rule was more mild and moderate than forceful. This all points to a certain vagueness about his ideals for the State, and to a latent trait of relativism, which did not seek (as modern historicism does) to establish by intuitive understanding the strengths and weaknesses of every particular State-form, but on the

[1] 1, 98. [2] *Avertissement* to vol. XI of his *Recueil*. [3] 1, 705.
[4] 1, 9; cf. above, p. 62, and Madsack, *Der Antimachiavell*, p. 77.
[5] 1, 720. [6] 1, 650.

contrary accepts what is given without impregnating it particularly strongly with his own ideals. Moreover he was entirely lacking in any propagandist passion for freer forms of government. It was with a kind of neutral indifference that he judged, not only the dynastic power-interests of the absolutist rulers, but also the modern mercantile interests of the more freely governed maritime powers. It was only for the ideas of tolerance and free trade that he showed a striking propagandist zeal. 'Trade refuses to be obstructed,' he remarked with regard to the customs duties on Rhine shipping. 'The more freedom one grants it, the more it will flourish, and the more profit will the sovereign also derive from it,' for moderate duties will be paid in full, whereas excessive duties will always encourage attempts to avoid them illegitimately.[1] If only, he sighed, the German Empire would not create so many hindrances to Dutch and English trade, if only Denmark was not so anxious to cheat the Dutch.[2] For Holland certainly did not want to make any conquests. 'The Republicans do not seek any quarrels with their neighbours.'

The peaceful exploitation of Europe by means of the trade of the maritime powers blessed with freedom and wealth—this was the basic interest of his adoptive fatherland, which he revealed so naïvely and which (so far as one can talk about a basic idea underlying his views about Europe) formed a guiding light. In his opinion the trading nations should learn to settle their differences and remove any small occasions of friction. At the same time he knew very well that even trade was dominated by the great power-relationships; and he had no illusions about the fact that the alliance between Holland and England was a *societas leonina*, and that England was trying as hard as possible to steal the Dutch trade. In Spanish and Portuguese harbours and in the Levant (he complained) [3] a hundred English ships were now trading against, at the most, ten Dutch ships; whereas formerly one saw there a hundred Dutch ships for every twenty English. And so he even considered the possibility of a complete change of system, and gave France to understand that it was an offence against her true interest if she restricted the Dutch sea-trade in her harbours, because she would thereby be driving Holland over to the English side. In any case, France would be committing the greatest possible mistake if she allowed her fleet to decay. One may well suppose that such ideas sprang from an old love for his fatherland that had not completely died out. A France which called back the Huguenots, and thereby made good the worst (in his opinion) mistake of Louis XIV, would have changed him into the most zealous advocate of her interests. Certainly, too, his feelings for Europe as a whole were still very alive in this. He demanded (as we have already seen) that France should finally renounce the hope of winning the

[1] 2, 25. [2] 1, 112, 734. [3] 1, 532.

Southern Netherlands—for Europe did not want this, the *droit de convenance* was against it. Ought not France to say to herself (he added very wisely) that, if the Southern Netherlands came into the possession of Austria, they would (in view of the sacrifices she would have to make for them) tend rather to weaken than to strengthen this far-flung power?

Thus his views swayed easily this way and that way, in an attempt to calculate, now in this manner, now in that, the European balance of power which always remained for him the alpha and omega of the European situation. He encouraged the Spaniards to an English alliance, and the King of Sardinia to an alliance with France. All in all, his instinct was certainly right in leading him to perceive in England the greatest possibilities for the future (and this in spite of the respect he had for the internal resources of France). 'There exist States, which find it impossible to limit their expansion. They cannot renounce making use of the first opportunity to make conquests; such is the situation in which the British Nation is placed. Being isolated on all sides, she has nothing to fear from her neighbours, whilst she is able to make them fear her and to find it profitable to conquer some of their provinces. This is proved by the cases of Gibraltar and Port Mahon.' The other powers would not indeed concede further European conquests to England, but by means of Gibraltar she becomes mistress of the Mediterranean.[1]

He did not presume to cure the restless power-drive of the States by methods resembling those of Abbé St. Pierre. He never once dared to criticize purely dynastic ambitions. What nation was at that time more restless and inclined to disturb the peace than Spain was, under the riding-crop of her foolhardy queen? One moment Spain was squabbling with France on account of dynastic rivalries for the future, the next she was making an attempt on the Italian territory of Austria, or again she was daring to pick a quarrel with mighty England, to seize Gibraltar or violently arrest the English smuggling trade in South America. It is almost amusing to hear Rousset's judgment on this problem of Spanish policy. He called it a frivolous pretext, that of preventing the English from carrying contraband, for Spain was taxing English trade even on the open sea. Thus Spain should be more reasonable, and stop cheating the English, and try rather for an alliance with England, in order to isolate Austria. It ought still to be the sole aim of Spain to win back everything that had been taken from her by the Peace of Utrecht, and how could she do this against the will of England? 'There are very solid reasons impelling the Spanish ministry to keep the nation in a continuous state of activity, producing project after project and one undertaking after another. The king's attention must be distracted, the nobles kept occupied, time must be gained in order to delay one event, and

[1] 1, 652.

thereby perhaps foresee the advent of another which gives complete freedom of action.' [1] It would be impossible to reproduce more succinctly, and at the same time in all its lack of character, the nature of this calculatingly opportunist policy. For it is very easy to suppose that he would have been glad to see Spanish ambition vent itself in Europe, in order that it should allow itself without hindrance to be exploited overseas by the commercial powers.

The proper corrective for the confusion produced in Europe by the Renaissance policy of Elisabeth Farnese seemed to Rousset to lie in the specific beneficial resources and power-resources of his time; in the propitiatory and lulling influences of a peaceful exchange of trade; in the effects of a wise cabinet-policy that would also succeed in overcoming national hatred between peoples ('It is the task of politics', he very truly remarked, 'to correct between the courts the antipathy that arises between nations' [2]); and then finally too it lay in the effects of that type of European congressional politics which had always sought to maintain Europe in a state of balance of power. He was sad when, at the end of the 'thirties, he saw a 'new system' arising, 'which completely upset that other system, whose glory it had been to restore peace in Europe more than once, and to maintain it'. This was the new and worse mode 'of dealing from court to court, and without any congress or intermediary'.[3]

The fact that this type of politics of interest, which strove to change Europe into the sphere of interest of enlightened and flexible commercial republics, actually concealed the basic element of Machiavellism in him, was something that he would certainly only have conceded with great unwillingness. For he abided by custom and ceremony, and by 'a healthy form of politics, based on right, on justice and the public welfare'; and he declared that in no sense did he share the opinion of those who considered it impossible to be at one and the same time a great politician and an honest man.[4] These questions did not move him more profoundly, and his cant was calmed by that harmony of wise tolerance and material well-being which (in spite of all cabinet wars) was capable of making the nations happy, if only they followed the doctrines of the maritime powers.

* * *

Everything that truly characterizes his political thought sprang from the experiences and interests of the maritime powers, from the dualism

[1] 1, 627 and 631. [2] 1, 633.
[3] Droysen, *Preuss. Politik*, IV, 4, p. 13, following the *Mercure hist. et pol.*, 1737, I, p. 6 f.
[4] *Intérêts*, 1, IV f.

and interaction of the Protestant-Germanic commercial and maritime politics and the sphere of Catholic Latin States, which in itself was struggling in a problematical dualism of economic and purely power-political interests. But the politics of the sea-powers was much too closely interwoven with the whole of Europe to absolve one from making a careful and critical study also of the world of middle and Eastern States. The War of the Polish Succession from 1733 to 1735, which compensated the Emperor for the loss of Southern Italy, pronounced a decision simultaneously on both Eastern and Western power-relationships. One saw now (Rousset remarked quite correctly) that the power of a State with never so many lands and subjects was still on a weak basis, if it did not possess funds in proportion. Thus it was learnt that the balance of power in Europe had to be assessed, not according to the number and extent of the kingdoms and provinces, but according to the equality of forces (amongst which financial resources deserved special attention).[1] He saw Austria thrown back on the defensive, and France (being allied with Spain) now in possession of political trumps, which might expose her to the temptation of disturbing the peace of Europe once again. The Pragmatic Sanction was now also recognized by France. But Rousset was aware of the brittle character of the whole arrangement of the Sanction. He predicted that France (who still had claims on different territories belonging to the Emperor) would seek and find her allies in the German Empire, principally amongst the Electoral Princes of Bavaria and Saxony who had been injured by the Pragmatic Sanction—but France also knew how to win Prussia, if she wanted to. Thus (he concluded) the territories guaranteed by the Pragmatic Sanction would become the objective of the most terrible war that had ever riven Europe.[2] These ideas are exactly the same as those which the Crown Prince Frederick, in his *Considérations* on the state of Europe in 1738, expressed or hinted at in a veiled manner.

And Rousset also had a certain premonition of the expansive forces which existed in the State of this young ruler. Today the King of Prussia (he remarked, with a light exaggeration) has an army of more than 90,000 men. There were no rulers in Europe who had more *prétentions* available from inheritances and other sources. The majority of the German imperial princes, especially the Catholic ones, would have been glad to see Prussia weakened, because her power daily became more frightening. The fact that Prussia desired to grow was clear to him; but the direction in which this would take place he had not yet guessed. He calculated that the first blow would have to be struck towards the East, against Poland, in order to acquire West Prussia as a consolidating territory. But, when he put himself in Prussia's place, he thought he could see even further possibilities of power. Today the court of

[1] 1, 6 f. [2] 1, 534 and 733.

Berlin must be more conscious than ever of the value of a navy, and nothing would be easier than to found one in Memel or in Pomerania itself. Prussia felt this need because, under the present government, manufacture was not encouraged so much as under the previous one, and foreign wares now had to be imported at high cost in foreign ships. And once in possession of a navy, Prussia could also contest the *Dominium maris* with Russia, Sweden and Denmark.[1]

This was a very instructive mistake about what constituted the vital interest of Prussia. Certainly the Great Elector had also dreamed of making Brandenburg into a great Baltic coastal and commercial power, and he built up this ambition on the marvellous pattern of Holland. But the European power-relationships had prevented his State (which was still much too weak) from achieving this, and Frederick William I had taken up his position firmly on the basis of a military continental power. All further efforts on the part of the State were wisely concentrated on strengthening this foundation which alone gave promise of security. Rousset failed to penetrate this mystery of Prussian *raison d'état*. He looked at the situation through Dutch eyes. He had not yet acquired the art of discerning what was most individual in foreign States—especially an element such as this, whose peculiar quality was still entirely embryonic.

We may omit his observations on the remaining parts of the Empire, and about the smaller powers of the North and East, for there is a certain repetition about the basic characteristics of his mode of judgment which we have now got to know. Whereas in 1685 Courtilz had been able to deal with the contemporary European interests of Russia in twenty-two lines, Rousset's description unfolds impressively before our eyes the drama of a great power suddenly arising. The State interests of Russia, which now revealed themselves, were still simple and elemental, and therefore easy to discern: thrusts and jabs, not only against the Baltic powers of Sweden and Poland, but also against the Turks. Moreover, that it was now a main interest for Russia that the Polish throne should be occupied by her candidates, could easily be seen from the history of the War of the Polish Succession. Rousset also paid some attention to the links that had grown up between Russia and Poland, and it does honour to the acuteness of his vision that he noticed the first small signs of an opposition between England and Russia, which appeared during the last years of the Northern War.[2] And he, the expert in sea-power and marine commerce, was just as quick to notice Peter the Great's first attempts towards founding a fleet. His advice to the Russians to go on with this was just as enthusiastic as his encouragement to Prussia. Perhaps he only did it in strict accordance with the

[1] 1, 812 ff.; cf. also 2, 242 f.

[2] 1, 722; cf. in addition 1, 510 ff. and 904 ff. (on Poland).

theory of pointing out to each State its own essential interests, and of prescribing for each individual the political recipes contained in his store of remedies. But perhaps he was also moved by an ulterior motive of which we have already observed traces: perhaps he also wanted to create a counterpoise to the naval importance of England, which was overpowering and unsatisfactory for Holland, by developing the smaller Baltic navies.

He already knew that the days of Turkey-in-Europe were numbered. As he correctly stressed, the rise of Russia to the status of a disciplined military power had in fact fundamentally changed the world situation of Turkey. He wrote down his ideas on this subject, but entirely failed to learn from the ill-success attending the Russian and Austrian offensive wars against the Porte in 1735–9, that the Turkish nation still possessed a strong defensive power. 'Against this nation', he noted, somewhat too lightheartedly, 'which observes no kind of discipline or rule in fighting its battles, only one stroke of luck would be needed in order to drive it before one like a herd of sheep.' But he prophesied correctly that the Turks would have the very greatest difficulty in reconquering Hungary.[1]

It was a transitional period in the life of the European States which Rousset had to depict; not in any way dead, but rather stirred by the growing significance of economic interests and the beginnings of new power-methods involving the whole of Europe, while simultaneously shot through with exuberant and wild ambitions of a courtly type and lacking in truly great ideas and impulses. And the observer shared the fate of political writings current in the absolutist eighteenth century. Such writings were certainly capable of displaying practical knowledge and capable judgment, but they lacked the great invigorating passion that accompanies new ideas about the State. The world in which he lived was too complete and too polished, and the continuance of its courtly-absolutist forces was too certain. It was only to a very limited extent that he could think of influencing it; in the main, he could only try to offer it something useful and instructive, and (with this in view) to unveil as many of its mysteries as possible. Thus he was certainly able to paint it as it was, but without the vital clarity and profundity which the pure need for knowledge is capable of giving. Thus a somewhat delusive quality is present in his portrayal.

It was from the ranks of the executive politicians themselves that the personality had to appear who would once again put new life-blood into the problems of *raison d'état* and the doctrine of State interests.

[1] 1, 522 ff.

CHAPTER TWELVE

FREDERICK THE GREAT

HITHERTO every epoch and every special spiritual and moral mode of thought had attempted, with its own weapons and on the basis of its own particular aims of life, to struggle with the daemon of *raison d'état*. Machiavelli had bluntly acknowledged it, but had tried to use it as an instrument for the regeneration of his fatherland; Boccalini, with a mixture of disgust and curiosity, had been able to conceive it as an evil and gruesomely absorbing basic phenomenon of State life. Campanella had known how to hate it more profoundly than Boccalini, and yet with a cynical resolve had undertaken, like Machiavelli, to use it as an instrument for even higher, indeed altogether utopian aims. All this took place during the period of an absolutism that was still incomplete and crude, and which, particularly at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was deeply agitated by the conflict between the continuing heathenism of the Renaissance and the resurrected vital force of the Church. Simultaneously, and more and more as time went on, there was a reaction, on the basis of Christian and Church ethics, against the heathen naturalism of *raison d'état*, and an attempt was made to render it harmless in the interests of a respectable form of politics, without essentially influencing its practical development which necessarily continued along the lines of Machiavelli and only gradually tended to become more civilized with regard to its means. Then, after the close of the religious wars, there came a period of a certain stabilizing and fixing of the problem, as was attempted for instance by Pufendorf's rigid practicality. The inner consolidation of absolutism continued; its inner work of forming the State and shaping the economic structure became more forceful and beneficial. So that, in spite of all the complaints about the evils of *raison d'état*, the rulers were no longer thought any the worse of for making use of its unclean methods in their struggles with other States. The deeper element of passion in dealing with this problem began to diminish. For the realism of the later seventeenth century, which gradually loosened the hold of dogmatic thought, did not succeed at

the same time in producing any new stronger and more deeply moving ideals which might have had to come to terms with *raison d'état*.

The position was quite different after the beginning of the eighteenth century. The advent of Deism and of a heightened trust in human reason created the ideal of a type of existence which would be freed from superstition and crude despotism and directed towards earthly happiness and well-being; moreover this ideal was to grow up within the old constitutional forms of the States, and in fact under the leadership of the very monarchs with whom it had triumphed. The monarch continued, as hitherto, to be described as 'the living likeness of God on earth';[1] but this was no longer accepted in a mystical and religious sense, but rather in a manner purified in accordance with Deism. The new catchword of 'Humanity' was produced, to describe the new goals and sentiments. Compared with the idea of humanity which was later to arise out of a profoundly stirred and ennobled inner life—namely, that of German Idealism—this older concept of humanity (which merely continued to develop the basic ideas of the old Stoic and Christian Natural Right)[2] was simpler, plainer, more general and more lacking in content. For it was directed principally towards the practical aim of making oneself and other men happy, and serving the community by developing the more natural human virtues of self-control and love of one's neighbour, by clarifying one's mind and getting rid of dull prejudices. It was essentially the mood of a community that was growing richer from an economic point of view, which thought it had travelled beyond the stage of civil and religious wars, and which—whether (as in England) under a constitutional State ruled by parliament, or (as on the continent) under the sceptre of powerful monarchs—enjoyed the blessing of a national protection of justice and peace. A century before, political thinkers had occasionally pictured to themselves the horrors of mob rule. Nowadays no one considered such possibilities any longer, for the *miles perpetuus* stood there ready and mustered, representing the most fruitful creation of seventeenth-century *raison d'état*. It was on these presuppositions of a cast-iron national order and the material progress which it made possible, that the characteristic optimism of the Enlightenment essentially rested: the belief in a degree of reason and civilization unattained in the recent past, and in the perfectibility of Man—the feeling that, as Frederick the Great once expressed it,[3] 'in our times, more mistakes are caused by ignorance than by evil'.

[1] Cf. above p. 265, and Frederick the Great's *Réfutation du prince de Machiavel*, *Œuvres*, 8, 164. In the *Examen de l'essai sur les préjugés* of 1770 (*Œuvres*, 9, 151) Frederick did in any case expressly abandon this old formula.

[2] Cf. Troeltsch, *Das stoisch-christl. Naturrecht und das moderne profane Naturrecht*, *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 106, 263 ff.

[3] *Essai sur les formes de gouvernement*, etc., *Œuvres*, 9, 210. It is well known that in his later years Frederick's view of human nature was usually very much more

And yet all this undeniable progress in national and cultural life had been quite unable to do away with the power-struggles among States. These went on occurring; though (as we have already seen) they were certainly, on the surface and as far as their methods were concerned, somewhat influenced and tinged by the ideas of the Enlightenment, nevertheless they were basically still just as harsh and unrelenting as in the despised centuries of barbarism. It is interesting to observe the attitude generally adopted towards this fact by that first epoch of the movement of the Enlightenment. It was an epoch that was by no means subject to any revolutionary mood; it still tended much more to respect the existing State authorities, and hoped to receive from their hand the reforms it desired. It still possessed also, as a legacy from the seventeenth century, a whole fund of a sober sense for reality. Thus, although the excesses of the spirit of conquest were still complained about, continued war and power-struggles were nevertheless accepted as something natural and unalterable which now could and should only be wisely moderated by politics of balance of power and *convenance* on the part of the great powers. The Abbé St. Pierre, who published his proposal for perpetual European peace in the year of the Treaty of Utrecht, certainly created a fashionable stir with his radical pacifism, but he remained an isolated utopian.

But it was still possible for the Enlightenment at this time (although, in the spiritual sphere, it showed a fondness for a certain wise policy of *convenance* and balance of power) to produce a state of profound agitation in various strong and original natures when they came to reflect on the essence of power politics. This was a sphere which still lay veiled in darkness and completely separated from the other spheres of life, whilst the latter were already brightened by the sun of the Enlightenment. Ought it not to be possible to conquer this sphere of life too, to purify it, civilize it, and allow reason to penetrate it? To do this completely would indeed involve disowning it and doing away with it altogether, and following in the footsteps of the Abbé St. Pierre, who in this respect had quite correctly drawn the logical consequences of the ideal of the Enlightenment. But this very ideal, if one really accepted it seriously and passionately, would not let one pacify oneself with conventional comfort, but hankered after a more thorough-going invasion of reason into this obscure sphere, and after a basic coming-to-terms with the ugliness of reality. Besides the politicians, the philosophers also demanded a hearing for these questions. But how if both were contained

sceptical, and in particular he believed that it was impossible to do away with superstition. And yet the optimism of the Enlightenment broke through in between. Cf. for example the letter to Voltaire of 18th Nov. 1777 (*Correspondence* published by Koser and H. Droysen, 3, 419): *Il paraît que l'Europe est à présent en train de s'éclairer sur tous les objets qui influent le plus au bien de l'humanité.*

in one person, and both endowed with passion and practical knowledge? Then it was possible to witness the most interesting spectacle of the time, in the attempt to reach an understanding between the ideal and the sense of reality. Then the ideas of the Enlightenment underwent a trial of strength in their struggle against the daemon of *raison d'état*. Then one could see what they were capable of achieving towards conquering for the realm of reason (so far as reality permitted) this main and basic part of State existence.

The life-work of Frederick the Great can be viewed in many contexts that are significant for universal history. One of the most important for the history of European thought is the context in which we shall seek to view it here. If any man of the eighteenth century had the vocation and the strength to solve the problem for his time, and to confer on *raison d'état* the aims and standards of universal human reason, then it was Frederick. It can be said that his whole life was dedicated to this task. With a heroism that was just as philosophical as it was political, he took it upon himself from the beginning and directed upon it all the divergent energies of his mind (which was by no means either simple or unambiguous) and all the scientific means of his time. The solution which he found and which satisfied him was certainly one which, in the main, he succeeded in discovering relatively quickly and early; but he did not allow it to deteriorate into a useful convention, but was ever re-considering it freshly and intensively, and so even latterly was able to add something new to it. So that, as will presently be shown, it was ultimately capable of leading on to new stages of historical and political knowledge. But he himself remained confined all the time within the limitations of his own time and its mode of thought. The weapons of the philosophy of the Enlightenment revealed themselves as still incapable of solving the problem in such a manner that reality and the ideal could be harmonized together. He was least capable of doing so during the period when he was most passionately occupied with the question—during his political and intellectual *Sturm und Drang* period on the eve of his reign. This very period is therefore all the more instructive with respect to the problems of his time and his personality.

* * *

Frederick prided himself on having been a man before he became a king [1]—and for him, being a man meant also being a philosopher. But the future ruler in him was developed earlier than the philosopher; [2]

[1] *Réfutation*, *Œuvres*, 8, 278.

[2] One may say this, although the first stirrings of a philosophical interest showed themselves much earlier—as early as 1728 he called himself *Frédéric le philosophe*. Cf. v. Sommerfeld, *Die philosoph. Jugendentwicklung des Kronprinzen Friedrich*, *Forschungen zur brand. u. preuss. Geschichte*, 31, 69 ff.

and from the very beginning this development followed the lines required by the *raison d'état* of a State that was strong from a military point of view, but from the point of view of territory was quite incomplete, indeed was incapable of completion. It is from the year 1731 that one dates his first great youthful dream of politics which envisaged consolidations of every kind for the dismembered territory of the State by means of West Prussia, Swedish Pomerania, etc.[1] The years of serious illness on the part of his father, 1734 and 1735, which brought him very close to the throne, did clearly stir up passionately his desire to rule. In secret conversations at that time, he offered himself to the French Ambassador as a second Gustavus Adolphus or Charles XII for the future use of French policy.[2] The fact that his father recovered deceived his expectations and produced a severe internal setback.[3] It is from then on that he first seems to have devoted himself to more serious philosophic and scientific studies, but simultaneously he showed an increased interest in the burning questions of power politics of the day. This was the beginning of his conscious double life as politician and philosopher, and as he grew to manhood it was reflected in his enthusiastic correspondence with Grumbkow, who gave him a feeling for Prussian politics and for the European politics of power and the balance of power. And it is also reflected in the two books which are now about to influence us as thesis and antithesis respectively in a weighty problem: the *Considérations sur l'état présent du corps politique de l'Europe*, which was produced at the turn of the years 1737–38,[4] and the *Réfutation du prince de Machiavel*, which was written in 1739 and (altered by Voltaire into the form of *Antimachiavell*) became known to the world in 1740.[5]

Thus it is a basic fact about his youthful development that his political

[1] Koser, *Geschichte Friedrichs des Grossen*, 4th and 5th ed., 1, 159.

[2] Lavisse, *Le Grand Frédéric avant l'avènement*, p. 327 f.

[3] Volz, *Die Krisis in der Jugend Friedrichs d. Gr.*, *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 118.

[4] See my analysis of the origin and aims of this work in the *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 117. Rohmer's work of research (*Vom Werdegange Friedrichs d. Gr.*, 1924), where it differs from my views, contains nothing that convinces me.

[5] The title *Réfutation du prince de Machiavel* was chosen by Preuss (on the basis of a description used by Frederick himself—to Voltaire on the 6th Nov. 1739), when for the first time he published in its entirety this purely Frederickian form of the book, in the *Œuvres*, 8. Cf. v. Sommerfeld, *Die äussere Entstehungsgeschichte des Antimachiavell Friedrichs d. Gr.*, *Forsch. zur brand. u. preuss. Gesch.*, 29, 460. He demonstrates that even the text of the *Réfutation* does not represent Frederick's very first plan of 1739, and that the changes in the edition of the *Antimachiavell* worked on by Voltaire go back, partly, to yet another version sent to Voltaire by Frederick himself. —For the sake of brevity, we refer to the book here by the title of *Antimachiavell* which has become traditional, but for obvious reasons we are using the text of the *Réfutation*. Madsack, *Der Antimachiavell* (1920), pp. 62 ff., has overlooked the important investigation by Sommerfeld.

interests were already formed before the development of his philosophical ideas. The future ruler and statesman had a priority over the philosopher. But in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of this priority, we need to make a comparison now between the ideas of his youthful period and those of his maturity. The relation between them is that between the first fruit-bud and the ripe fruit.

It must first of all be observed that from the very outset the ruler (which dominated the philosopher in him) was not a ruler in the conventional and customary—one might almost say, in the natural and organic—sense. Certainly the most personal impulses of a great ruler—ambition on the grand scale, a passionate love of glory and pleasure in power—were all present in him in such an elementally vital, and to begin with almost excessive form, that our judgment might appear surprising. But the element of princely *milieu* in him was absorbed remarkably early by the princely individual in him. As part of the natural and organic personality of a ruler, one should find that all-suffusing consciousness of belonging to a select stock, a feeling which is nevertheless founded on a completely unconscious element, on the powerful and elemental instincts of blood, family and consanguinity, which the centuries have helped to fashion into an absolutely natural tradition of thought and feeling. The dynasty was the first and most basic one in the development towards the modern State; and its sentiments, which were so peculiarly different from any sense of belonging purely to the State, remained alive right up to the very last Hohenzollern ruler (and ultimately proved so disastrous for the dynasty, and for our country). This family instinct that they were rulers—which embraced not only their own dynasty, but also all the rest of the princely stock of the Christian world, as forming a divinely blessed and elevated social sphere with common interests—was completely lacking in Frederick. In any case, he died early. He might perhaps have developed this sense, if he had married a consort who was his equal in feeling and intelligence. But the completely new and individual manner (so different from the normal custom among rulers), in which he handled his marriage, condemned the unloved spouse to living a separate and superficial royal existence, and himself to an almost ascetic bachelor life, and indicates a fundamental weakness in him of the instinct for blood and family, and equally points to a fundamental strength of his purely individual will.

His *Antimachiavell* confirms this impression. It is quite free from any specifically dynastic feeling, from any solid respect for princely stock. It is founded on just this basic idea that a purely dynastic interest is of no value at all if it lacks the foundation of a real popular and national collective whole; it implies that Machiavelli's counsels were therefore of little value, because they were drawn from the *principini* of his time,

those hermaphroditic crosses between sovereign and private individual. But even those smaller princely equivalents of his fatherland, who could pride themselves on a better quality of lineage than Machiavelli's *principini*, fared no better in his opinion.[1] It is scarcely necessary to recall his countless later expressions of contempt for mere pride of birth and his mordant criticisms of his princely counterparts. These remarks, which were inspired by philosophical theory or by a personal pleasure in contempt,[2] are less interesting than the manner in which he treated the dynastic questions of statecraft in the two political Testaments of 1752 and 1768. Here the ruler in him speaks out on the subject of the essential nature of princely rank in a more unequivocal, deliberate and austere manner than anywhere else. One only has to read the passage about 'hereditary rulers' in the first Testament: [3] 'They form a species of individual that is neither sovereign nor private person, and is occasionally very difficult to control.' The importance of their lineage gives them a certain pride, which they call nobility, and which makes obedience insupportable to them and every form of subjection hateful. One must load them with every kind of outward honour, but keep them at a distance from affairs; and, if one is sure of their talent and their reliability, they should be used for leading troops. Richelieu had already had the same ideas about this.[4] But it was easier for Richelieu to think in this way, than for a born ruler. The remarkable thing about it is that Frederick's instructions were entirely free from any kind of family feeling. During the weeks after the Battle of Kolin, he turned against his unfortunate brother, the Prince Augustus William, with a terrible harshness.[5]

And then there were the remarks about the education of princes in the two Testaments.[6] He laid an enormous importance on the question of the spirit in which the monarchs were to be educated, for he saw that the fate of the kingdoms depended on this.[7] It was precisely for this reason that he demanded a radical break with the existing method of education, which tended to envelop the young ruler in a cloud of bigoted prejudices of the court, and (we may add) fostered most

[1] *Réfutation*, *Œuvres*, 8, 208 f.

[2] Cf. for instance the instructions to Major v. Borcke in 1751, regarding the education of Prince Frederick William, *Œuvres*, 9, 39, and the satirical poem of 1770 on the rulers of his time, *Œuvres*, 13, 41 ff., as also the passages quoted in Zeller, *Friedrich d. Gr. als Philosoph*, p. 240 f.

[3] *Die politischen Testamente Friedrichs d. Gr.*, edition of 1920, p. 33.

[4] W. Mommsen, *Richelieu als Staatsmann*, *Histor. Zietschr.*, 127, 223. It may be recalled that Spinoza too, in his *Tractatus politicus*, ch. 6, § 14, and ch. 7, § 23, recommends general rules for rendering some of the princes of the royal blood harmless.

[5] Koser, *Geschichte Friedrichs d. Gr.*[5], 2, 513.

[6] *Polit. Testamente*, pp. 102 ff. and 231 ff.

[7] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 69 and 223 concerning France.

strongly that dynastic and hereditary instinct. The ruler should be educated 'as a private person'—but this phrase alone would be very misleading; for it did not have in view any democratic levelling of the future ruler, on the contrary it was directed towards a strictly rational education for the position of Head of the State. It was intended to produce a ruler who would stand on his own feet and view the world in a critical and unprejudiced manner, and who would be sufficiently independent of the resources of princely majesty that 'he would by himself be able to create his own happiness'. This then constituted the sense of dynasty in his eyes: it produces human material, from among which the central person required to lead the State may be selected, in order then to undergo a pure form of cultural training for this vocation. In the process he ought to learn to treat his own brothers and cousins solely in accordance with their usefulness towards the State. Certainly, from an external point of view, the old historic dignity of a collective dynasty ought to be maintained, but with regard to its internal structure it ought to be stripped of its sentimental and traditional associations, and converted into a utilitarian organization for the benefit of the State. Every irrational and natural organic element in it which did not contribute to this end was to be suppressed as far as possible. A living historical growth thus becomes rationalized—rationalized in exactly the same way as the State-system of Frederick the Great rationalized the (in many ways so irrational and individual) growth of the domestic landed nobility, and turned it into a forcing-bed for the officer corps, which the army of that time needed in just this and no other capacity; it was to be done in the same way as the burgher and peasant classes were rationalized and used for the financial and military ends of State and power. Rationalization, for the purposes of the State, of those social forces that had developed since the Middle Ages—this was the sum of his domestic policy. Thus they were indeed retained, but at the same time they were quite clearly prevented from following the lines of their own individual development.

All these measures of rationalization were bound to succeed in making the Prussian State into a real great power, and in raising it above the class of German territorial States, ruled on purely dynastic lines. But a peculiar inner antinomy was thereby introduced into the essential character of Frederick and his State. For what great State was and continued to be—more than the Prussian—both the creation and at the same time the inherited patrimony of a dynasty? This original character could not be entirely effaced by all these rationalizations. Indeed they only caused it to appear all the more clearly, because one immediately perceived the heterogeneous past that lay behind this artificially and consciously fashioned State-form which stood in such an obvious contrast to all the great powers that had grown up on a

natural basis. Indeed the very will to become something different and something more than birth and origin really allowed, here impelled the inborn character of a dynastic State to assume its clearest and most distinctive expression. 'So must thou be, thou canst not escape thyself.' Frederick's consciously undynastic conception of the State offers one of the most remarkable examples of the Hegelian process of dialectical development, of the *coincidentia oppositorum* in history: the example of a historical idea being forced by internal pressure and growth to change into its opposite, while at the same time an intimate continuity is maintained between the two contrasting ideas.

Frederick rationalized even himself; he knew how to control those impulses in his nature that were light-hearted and pleasure-loving, and which he felt to be inessential and harmful for the task of ruling, in order to change himself into the 'first servant of the State'. This process of self-education and transformation was fully at work in him from the middle of the thirties. One finds already in his *Antimachiavell* the remark that the ruler is the first servant of his people, and that he must look upon his subjects not merely as his equals, but in certain respects as his masters.[1] This remark was not in any way an isolated or merely personal recognition. It was the ripe product of the course of ideas hitherto concerning the problem of *raison d'état*. The ruler is the servant of *raison d'état*, of State interests—this had already been taught by the Italians and by Rohan. But other thinkers of the seventeenth century had been able to give this idea of the ruler being a servant an anti-absolutist turn, by taking this ruler's master to be no longer *raison d'état* or the *salus publica*, but purely and simply the people. Frederick linked himself with them, and perhaps coined his phrase in memory of similar expressions which he had read in Fénélon or Bayle.[2] But (and this is not always recognized) it proceeded from a deep and personal living basis in Frederick himself. One may perhaps look upon the feeling of dependence on a higher power as a most intimate and personal emotion of his being. It was therefore of some significance that he grew up in an intellectual atmosphere, in which Calvinist ideas were able to exert an influence. As a young man he grasped eagerly at the doctrine of predestination, and, when he afterwards changed into a worldly philosopher, he defended against Voltaire Man's dependence on the divinity and the idea that the human will was not free. It was certainly possible then for his determinism to stiffen in a naturalistic fashion into a belief

[1] *Réfutation* (*Œuvres*, 8, 168 and 298).

[2] Madsack, *Der Antimachiavell*, p. 79. Fénélon says in *Télémaque* that the king is a slave of his people. Bayle, in an article which Frederick also uses elsewhere, mentions the opinion of Althusius and others, that rulers are *des valets, des commis ou des procureurs du peuple.*

in some incomprehensible Fate which caused men to move like puppets.[1] But the living environment of his calling worked against this stiffening influence. At this profoundest point of his life, it was possible for philosophy, ethics and politics all to join hands. For who can fail to perceive their mutual influence in his spirit, when one sees how strongly (as he developed into a politician) he felt himself dependent on the duty of his calling, and at the same time on the constraining force of *raison d'état*. It was 'A form expressed, unfolding vitally' and his career now became (as Ranke says on one occasion) [2] not his choice, but his destiny.

Thus the spirit of pure and strict *raison d'état* came to assume the mastery in him—but certainly not with any of that abstract and impersonal objectivity which might have made the agent of *raison d'état* into a mere interchangeable instrument for a task; on the contrary it was penetrated and fused with the vital will of a proud personality, who in this very task discerned the life-form allotted to himself and the possibility of developing his most personal qualities. During the terrible year 1761, he wrote to William Pitt: [3] 'I allow myself to be guided by two principles. One is honour, and the other is the interest of the State, which Heaven has entrusted to my care. With these two maxims, my dear Sir, one never gives way to one's enemies.' This principle of 'honour' certainly also covered all that personal pleonexia, which is unavoidably linked with action prompted by *raison d'état*. Who could fail to perceive it in the great decisions of Frederick's life? Nothing is more indicative of the degree to which both his kingdom and he himself were rationalized, than the famous instruction, which he wrote, on 10th January 1757, to his minister Count Finckenstein, in case of disaster overtaking him: 'If it should be my fate to be taken prisoner, then I forbid anyone to have the smallest concern for my person, or to pay the slightest attention to anything I might write from my place of confinement. If such a misfortune should befall me, then I shall sacrifice myself for the State, and everyone must then obey my brother; I shall hold him, and all my ministers and generals, responsible with their heads for seeing that neither a province nor a ransom is offered for my release, but that the war is continued and every advantage seized, just as if I had never existed in the world.' [4]

Rohan (who had also grown up amongst Calvinist feelings of dependence) said that rulers commanded nations, but that interest commanded the rulers. Now, since his time, this State interest had not only become more acute, but also wider and deeper. It had become

[1] Paul-Dubois, *Frédéric le Grand d'après sa correspondance politique*, 1903, p. 295 f.

[2] *Werke*, 27/28, 480.

[3] *Polit. Korresp.*, 20, 508.

[4] *Œuvres*, 25, 320.

sharper in that it was now more precisely and consciously separated from the dynastic interest with which it had originally been united—and further in that it had pressed into its service the conduct of men in every social stratum, from the monarch down to the peasant, thereby in many ways diverting them from their natural course of development and changing them designedly and purposively. It had become widened and deepened in that it had come to include the humanitarian ideals of the Enlightenment; and the phrase about the 'general welfare', which was to form the content of State interest, was now spoken with greater warmth and with a greater wealth of association. There arose at the same time the ideal of the modern State, which was to be not only a power-State, but also a cultural State; and the inadequate restriction of *raison d'état* to the mere tasks of directly securing power, with which the theorists of the seventeenth century were in many ways still occupied, was now overcome. Frederick held it a very serious and sacred task to procure for his subjects the very highest measure, compatible with the requirements of his State, of earthly happiness, material welfare, intellectual awakening and moral vigour; and this determination sprang from a deep and original feeling which one can only perceive with difficulty beneath the mordant tones of his contempt for humanity. For icy coldness and inner warmth were always welling up in him simultaneously and in opposition to one another.[1] 'To show sympathy with the weaknesses of men, and to have a feeling of humanity for everyone—that is the way in which a reasonable man should act.' [2] This humanitarian idea of the State remained alive in him from the beginning to the end. It was certainly often assumed that, after the Seven Years War, his feeling grew harsher and more inflexible, because his governmental practice subsequently took on a sharper fiscal character. There was some astonishment when his Political Testament of 1768 became public and it was seen that the humanitarian and philanthropic points of view were expressed more frequently in this later document than in the earlier Testament of 1752.[3] He did not intend to conceal, with decorative phrases, the harsher methods which he was now practising, for he also

[1] This was clumsily misunderstood by Lavisse, *Le Grand Frédéric avant l'avénement*, when on p. 169 he made the judgment: *Non, il n'était pas bon.* Much more just and in many ways also more subtle was the judgment of Paul-Dubois; but even he (making use of the French psychological methods, which are certainly mordant, but also schematic) makes too sharp a division between the different aspects of Frederick's character, between the elemental basic nature and the contemporary ideas by which he was moved.

[2] *Dissertation sur les raisons d'établir ou d'abroger les lois* (1750), *Œuvres*, 9, 33; cf. his letter to Voltaire, of 8th January 1739. Koser and H. Droysen, *Briefwechsel usw.*, 1, 232.

[3] Hintze, *Friedrich d. Gr. nach dem Siebenjährigen Kriege und das Polit. Testament von 1768*, *Forschungen zur brand. u. preuss. Geschichte*, 32, 43. Cf. also H. v. Caemmerer in the *Hohenzollern-Jahrbuch*, 1911, p. 89.

expressed these sharply enough at the same time. It was rather that he felt a need to prevent himself losing sight of the guiding star of humanity, particularly now when he was letting himself be influenced by the stern necessity for using harsh methods to protect the existence of an insecure and continually threatened State.

Thus his path of action was always quite clear and unambiguous. The imperative command of State necessity, as he understood it, triumphed always, and on all occasions where there was any choice, over the demands of humanity, and even over the ideals of his philosophy of the Enlightenment. But because this latter also engrossed him in an intimate and vital way, there was a strong problematical element in his thought. The supreme task which he set before the ruler and the State did not only embrace what had hitherto been the narrower aim of *raison d'état*, namely the guaranteeing and strengthening of its physical power; it also embraced that other humanitarian ideal of educating the people and making them happy. Thus two ideas of the State dwelt in him side by side—the idea of the humanitarian State and of the power-State: one, which had been created anew by the Enlightenment or at least filled with new content, and the other, which sprang from life, from history and experience, and which was continually being freshly confirmed by daily experience and necessity. It is impossible to avoid seeing that the second was prior to the first. It is easier to overlook the fact that this priority never led to a disappearance of the humanitarian idea of the State. So there was eventually bound to occur in him a very special and problematical kind of settling of accounts between the two ideas of the State. Indeed, to begin with (as we are about to show) he himself was under the mistaken impression that he had not only harmonized the two heterogeneous ideas, but actually fused them together into complete unity with one another.

It was at first possible for him to believe this, because he himself had inserted part of the philosophy of the Enlightenment into the very idea of the power-State. He did this by his conception of the ruler as the first servant of the State, by his suppression of the purely dynastic elements in his thought and action, and by emphasizing the universally human qualities and tasks of his position. It is true that there were two sides to this action. It certainly threw a bridge across between the old power-State and the new ideal of the Enlightenment which tended to refer everything to what was universally human. But at the same time it sharpened the weapons of the power-State by cleaning from them the rust of the bad princely tradition and of useless personal and dynastic motives, while it also caused the bearer of power to recognize new and purer duties towards the State as a whole; but this in turn strengthened the ruler's belief in the real justification of using his power-methods, in drawing the sword and making use of all the great and small devices of

statecraft. And this was, in the very highest degree, the case with the power politics of Frederick the Great. We shall find it confirmed by his conception of the interests of States.[1]

And moreover, even in the realm of domestic politics it was not so difficult to achieve a satisfying harmony between *raison d'état* and the ideal of the Enlightenment. The security of the State in the face of foreign enemies was the first elementary prerequisite for any kind of humanitarian domestic policy. All the sacrifices and burdens which he laid upon his subjects, every renunciation which he, as monarch, had to make in refraining from carrying out philanthropic reforms, all restrictions put upon the humanitarian idea of the State within the country, could immediately be justified to his conscience by the supreme law of this State, namely that of maintaining an unusually strong and strictly organized army.[2] But Frederick was also in a position where he could carry on his domestic policy on much more moral principles than was possible for the rulers of the Renaissance. The latter had to be on their guard against enemies not only abroad but also inside the country; and so Machiavelli had felt himself obliged to advise his ruler to use the discreditable arts of deception even in dealing with his own subjects. But in the military monarchies there now reigned deep peace, order and discipline. To continue making use of those same Machiavellian methods within the State was now entirely superfluous, and therefore seemed hateful. And Frederick also knew that it was unwise to set his subjects a bad example.[3] He demanded complete purity, uprightness and honourableness in the relations between ruler, State and people, and was in the main able to act accordingly.[4] His handling of the administration of justice (at least in regard to its subjective intentions) has a flavour, not only of a utilitarian, but even of an ethical approach; and this was all the more true of his policy of tolerance. There is even (as has been correctly observed) a certain element of the American and French views on human rights in both of them.[5] In the weaker type of State, threatened by inner dissension, which had existed in the period of the Renaissance and Counter-

[1] Regarding the rationalist element in Frederick's politics, cf. also Küntzel, *Zum Gedächtnis Friedrichs d. Gr.*, *Marine-Rundschau*, 1912, 206 ff., and his presentation of Frederick in the *Meister der Politik*, published by Marcks and v. Müller.

[2] He was certainly able to conceal this basic motive from his contemporaries, and to justify the maintenance of the 'barbaric' agrarian system by a regard for the agreements between landowners and peasants and for the interests of agriculture based as they were on these. *Essai sur les formes de gouvernement*, 1777, *Œuvres*, 9, 205 f.

[3] *Histoire de mon temps* of 1746, *Publik. aus den K. preuss. Staatsarchiven*, 4, 299; version of 1775, *Œuvres*, 2, 22 f.; cf. also Madsack, *Der Antimachiavell*, p. 82 n.

[4] *La dissimulation devient réprouvable, quand le fort s'en sert envers le faible, le prince envers le subjet. Polit. Testament* of 1768, p. 219.

[5] Hintze, *loc. cit.*, p. 54.

Reformation, intolerance had been a matter of *raison d'état*. But in the more secure military State of the eighteenth century this principle had become old-fashioned. State interest no longer needed to use religious unity of the subjects as a guarantee of their obedience. It could now to a certain extent release the burden, withdraw from this province and leave it to develop in its own way. In general, as the State grew more powerful, it was able to become more liberal and moral, though certainly only in that province where its power was now completely dominant, that is to say within its own frontiers. But wherever its power was still insecure and threatened by incalculable oppositions, namely in the sphere of foreign interests, Frederick was bound to recognize the validity of harsher and cruder laws.

The very instrument of these interests, namely the armed forces, was subject to this constraining power. The Frederickian army was created and trained for combat by methods that were in many ways barbaric. And so far as one can see, Frederick never reckoned this barbarism in his military affairs to be a problem worth considering; and he never attempted to introduce more ethical and humane principles into the underlying ideas. In individual instances he was certainly capable of being humane and ethical towards his soldiers; he was even capable of trying, by means of decrees, to restrict any ill-treatment of them. But the structure of the army itself remained unaffected by this. He did not let the light of his humanity penetrate to this obscure basis of State power. Here he was caught himself in the dark naïvety of the man of action. The barbaric elements in his military matters (most of all, the practice of enlisting the scum of society at the foreign recruiting depots) were so intimately and inseparably bound up with the whole closely calculated system of his policy for population, finance and economics, that the entire edifice would have seemed to him in danger of destruction, if he had so much as moved one stone from the foundations.

But the sphere of foreign policy seemed to him, and indeed was, more fluid and flexible. Here there was no question of a rigid institution to which a man of the Enlightenment could shut his eyes. On the contrary, one was concerned here with a daily business of acting and taking decisions; with a mode of action which, though it was conditioned by what lay outside, was nevertheless determined by what lay within; and in short with the sphere in which, at every other moment, a compromise had to be reached between freedom and necessity. In this sphere the requirements of morality and the claim of the philosophy of the Enlightenment to pass a critical judgment on the real world made themselves heard in an imperious manner. And Frederick struggled earnestly, and from time to time passionately, to find an answer to the obscure questions which were forced upon him here by his vocation.

He began (as we have seen) as a political practitioner of power

interest, but the philosophical point of view was close behind. The two approaches are entwined in the most remarkable manner in the *Considérations* of 1738. In order to strengthen the threatened hereditary claims of his House to Jülich-Berg, he wanted to influence by means of a pamphlet those powers whose support was now important for Prussia, notably Bavaria and most of all the maritime powers; indeed even France, which was attacked by him in the book, might perhaps in the end (once he had disclaimed the publication) be influenced by it in some roundabout manner. A peculiar concealed ambition revealed itself in the allusions to the great future opportunity for important undertakings, an opportunity which would certainly arise after the death of the Emperor Charles VI. But from the very outset he fashioned his very deliberate and shrewdly calculated observations into a philosophy, which at once demanded to be accepted for its causal, and not its ethical value. The most important point for our general argument is that Frederick linked together in this book the stimulating ideas he had received from Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (which had appeared in 1734)[1] with the traditions of the doctrine of interest. It is not so much a question of whether he knew any of the writings on this subject dealt with by us, and if so which;[2] for their basic ideas were common property among the diplomatic chancelleries of Europe. In any case we recognize the familiar atmosphere when in the very Introduction we read about the 'true interests of the kingdom' and the 'fixed principles' of the courts which have to be investigated under the cloak of diplomatic representation. And all the optimism of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, directed here towards the matter of causation, was now elevated into a grandiose claim: namely, that with its help the 'transcending spirit' of a historical politician would be capable of explaining the mechanism of political history, of demonstrating the unbroken chain of cause and effect stretching down from the most remote centuries, and finally of predicting the future. 'It is a matter of wisdom to be able to know everything, to judge everything and to foresee everything.' [3]

Characteristic words, full of the exaggeration of youth, but also rich with meaning! For suddenly there comes to life here (something which was brought to fruition by Montesquieu's energetic application of the method of causal analysis) [4] an understanding for the immense value of

[1] Demonstrated by M. Posner, *Die Montesquieunoten Friedrichs II, Histor. Zeitschr.*, 47, 253 ff. Cf. also Koser, *Geschichte Friedrichs d. Gr.*, 5th ed., 1, 148, and Küntzel in the *Festgabe für F. v. Bezold* (1921), pp. 234 ff.

[2] Regarding this, *vide infra.*

[3] *Œuvres*, 8, 3 f. He thereby anticipated the watchword of Positivism: *Savoir pour prévoir et prévoir pour pourvoir.*

[4] Cf. Montesquieu, *De la grandeur des Romains*, etc., ch. 18: *Ce n'est pas la fortune qui domine le monde . . . il y a des causes générales, soit morales, soit physiques, qui*

the doctrine of State interests for the knowledge of history, and for the significance of these veins running through history; but at the same time he also began to perceive a much closer and more intimate connection between universal history and day-to-day politics, than he had been conscious of hitherto. In Frederick's hands, the boldly hoped-for insight into the laws of world history and the history of States was bound to become, first and foremost, a means directed towards his political ends. And one fundamental tendency of his political thought and desires revealed itself forcefully and imperiously: namely, that of predicting the future, of calculating the probable course of events as a whole, and of blending what he thereby arrived at, together with the whole content of his experience, into a system, within the closed framework of which his action then to a great extent remained confined. Later on, as a natural reaction due to his sceptical turn of mind, he frequently enough recognized drastically the fallibility and questionable character of such predictions; and he cautiously restricted his innate tendency to set in motion important long-term plans based on such calculations, at any rate in the much too fluid sphere of foreign policy.[1] But this inclination to divine and guide the future by means of intellectual power—and that meant also the rationalizing of irrational things—is revealed by the famous *Rêveries politiques* and *Projets chimériques* in his Political Testaments. For even politics (so he says there) [2] has its metaphysics; and the politician must be permitted, just as much as the philosopher, to disport himself in this field and to recognize goals which, veiled in the deepest mystery, would be capable of guiding subsequent generations.

So once again the spirit of contemporary philosophy flowed into the bed of the old national and historical forces and tendencies. A new sense for empiricism and causality had already arisen in the seventeenth century, and (as we have seen) it had perceptibly aided Rohan's doctrine of interest. The progress made by science, in giving a mechanical explanation of the connections existing in Nature, had promoted the tendency to look for laws exerting a mechanical influence in history too. The Enlightenment, filled with pride and self-consciousness, and referring everything to the Universal, now introduced into these attempts a joyous forward impulse, confident of making an important advance in knowledge. And henceforth all knowledge (this being an essential part of the strongly utilitarian philosophy of the Enlightenment) ought to serve the interests of life and practical affairs. Here, for

agissent dans chaque monarchie. . . . En un mot, l'allure principale entraîne avec elle tous les accidents particuliers.

[1] This has been correctly observed by Volz, *Die auswärtige Politik Friedrichs d. Gr., Deutsche Rundschau*, Sept. 1921, but he failed to notice Frederick's natural inclination which he himself was holding in check here.

[2] P. 59; cf. also *ibid.*, p. 36: *Un politique ne doit jamais dire: Je n'ai pas cru que telle ou telle chose arrivât; son métier est de tout prévoir et d'être préparé à tout.*

instance, are the words of the young Frederick in the *Considérations* which he inserted into an investigation of the important new successes of French policy: [1]

'There is no better means of arriving at a correct and precise idea of events happening in the world, than that of comparing them, choosing examples from history, placing them alongside the events happening today, and then observing the relations and similarities between them. Nothing is worthier of human reason; nothing is more instructive or more calculated to increase the sum of our knowledge.' For the human reason was the same in every country and every century; only that the degree of the constantly-recurring and similar passions was capable of being completely different in the different epochs. But in general, in the history of States, like causes and like effects were necessarily bound to recur.

This was also the teaching of Montesquieu; [2] Machiavelli too had thought so, only he was (as it were) like an early pioneer, labouring with difficulty. But now one trod these paths quite easily and on wings. And so, as an appendix to this line of thought, Frederick now added quite boldly and with certainty the judgment that: 'The policy of the great monarchies has always been the same. Their fundamental principle has constantly been to grasp at everything in order to increase their territory continually; and their wisdom has consisted in forestalling the tricks of their enemies, and playing the subtler game.'

The constant principle of rulers to increase their territory was in practice certainly subject to countless variations, according to the situation of the States, the power of one's neighbours and the state of affairs; but the principle itself was unalterable and rulers never departed from it. 'It is a question of their ostensible glory; in a word, they *must* increase in size.' [3]

Here there was an exact agreement between the universalism of the Enlightenment, trying hastily to explain everything, and the bitter naturalism of Machiavelli; for both drew on reality and experience. But the Enlightenment was not only hasty in explaining things, but also hasty in judging and condemning them. The little phrase about ostensible glory (*prétendue gloire*), interspersed in a ruthlessly naturalistic line of thought, strikes one as a note from a different, a quite different register. For what did the humanitarian department of the Enlightenment say to this crude conclusion reached by its causality department? Here one sees the complete helplessness and powerlessness of one with

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 18 f.

[2] *De la grandeur des Romains*, ch. 1: *Comme les hommes ont eu dans tous les temps les mêmes passions, les occasions qui produisent les grands changements sont différentes, mais les causes sont toujours les mêmes.*

[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 15.

regard to the other. For it creates an almost comic effect when Frederick, at the close of the *Considérations*,[1] sheds the ceremonial dress of the politician and slips on the mantle of the philosopher and then, pointing to the permanent principles of State life which he has established and which rest on the iron law of causality and the iron constancy of events, brands them morally as 'false principles'. Now he admonished rulers to leave the path they had strayed into, where their subjects became the instrument of their improper passions, and return to the true path of the princely calling and live for the happiness of their subjects. 'Their high position is only the work of the people', who had chosen from among themselves the person they considered most suitable to rule them in a paternal manner. Only one step further and he would have gone on, from this fundamental recognition of the sovereignty of the people, to reach Rousseau's revolutionary ideas. But often in history the final consequences of ideas can only be drawn when life is ready for the whole series. The vital power of personal interest, not consciously felt, but nevertheless self-evident, prevented him from taking this step. He could scarcely saw off the branch that bore him. But his verdict on the power politics of rulers now stood out as inconsistent and undefended on either flank—open to Machiavelli's naturalism just as much as to Rousseau's ethical radicalism based on natural rights. Never again, so far as we can see, are Frederick's humanitarian idea of the State and his idea of the power-State so naïvely superimposed one on the other within the same intellectual sphere.

And he did also have some idea of the contradiction involved. Mindful of the Prussian interest in making sure of the Jülich-Berg inheritance (which was the thing that had caused him to take up his pen), he closed his book with the words: 'It is a shame and a humiliation to lose parts of one's territory; and it is an act of injustice and criminal robbery to conquer lands to which one has no legitimate right.' Thus he considered that power politics was only permissible and necessary, when based on *droit légitime*, and not on *droit de bienséance*; this was the compromise by which he extricated himself from his dilemma. And it is interesting to see what pledges he sought for the preservation of this limitation. The ruler ought to rule personally himself, and ought to watch personally over the machinations of his neighbour-States, prepare for them shrewdly and wisely, and restrain the activity of greedy and restless spirits by making good alliances. It was the practice of blindly surrendering affairs to ministers that he considered was the chief reason for the excesses of power politics.[2] And altogether was not the very nature of his whole grandly-conceived enterprise—that of

[1] P. 25 f.

[2] Concerning the probable actual occasion for these conclusions, cf. my essay on the *Considérations*, *Hist. Zeitschr.*, 117, 56, n. 2.

ennobling and reforming the idea of the power-State by means of the humanitarian idea—was it not one that demanded the intense concentration and most acute watchfulness of a unified will? For completely new paths had to be trodden here, paths which were not yet a familiar part of the routine of the ordinary type of minister. And with an intense and passionate desire he wanted to serve both at the same time, not only the peaceful happiness of his people, but also the power and glory of his State. It was only himself alone that he trusted to find the narrow path on the razor's edge that made both possible.

It was then that the decision to *gouverner par lui-même* [1] was taken, and afterwards carried through right to the end of his life with an iron consistency. From the very moment when he began to rule himself this resolve was strengthened and hardened by the special situation of his State, whose needy natural resources could only be maintained in a sound and healthy condition by means of a quite deliberate economy. Such decisions usually proceed in the first place from the pressure of real conditions, and only afterwards succeed in acquiring an ideal sanctity. But when the young crown prince, against the wishes of his father's negligent ministers, wanted to seize the helm himself, this was an event that also partook of a great idealistic conception. He was hoping to unite interest and idea in a masterly manner. Out of the bitter experiences undergone by Prussia after 1735 (owing to the unscrupulous Machiavellian statecraft pursued by the Great Powers) and out of the humanitarian ideals conceived at this very time, there grew up in 1739 his *Antimachiavell*, stemming from interest and idea simultaneously. For the contradiction between interest and idea, which had destroyed for him the inner connectedness of his *Considérations*, left him no peace. Now this contradiction would be removed altogether from the world; the wicked Machiavelli would be finally banished from the world—and from his own spirit. For who could fail to perceive that here he had arranged a secret dialogue with himself, and with the passionate impulses inside him.

He wanted to defend himself seçurely against himself. He was undoubtedly thinking about himself when (in the *Avant-propos* of his book) he spoke of the young ambitious man, whose personality and powers of judgment were not yet fixed, and in whose hands Machiavelli's dangerous book might be capable of causing the very greatest harm. Moreover, since he detected the criticism which the modern public imbued with the Enlightenment were making about the practice of the courts,[2] he also wanted to offer a general defence of the princely

[1] Regarding this, cf. also *Réfutation*, *Œuvres*, 8, 272 f.

[2] Cf. *Réfutation*, p. 282, and P. Wittichen, *Machiavelli und Antimachiavelli*, *Preuss. Jahrbücher*, 119, 489; one of the few useful observations in an essay that is otherwise entirely superficial and erroneous.

calling; and he wanted to show that an enlightened and moral ruler could still be a practical ruler, and that his 'true interest' was in harmony with virtue.[1] Whereas in the *Considérations* he had mixed a large dose of Machiavellian politics with a small dose of moral antidote, in the *Antimachiavell* he mixed a large dose of moral principles with a considerable reservation on the part of the sober realistic politician. For the very reason that he thought he could see in Machiavelli a diabolical caricature of what he himself was practising, it was possible for a righteous anger to blaze up in him; and so he was bound to feel obliged to attack him with the strongest ethical weapons his period could offer.

The unhistorical method used in this coming-to-terms with the greatest political thinker of the Renaissance has often enough been remarked on. People still felt themselves to be, as it were, on a level with past events; and they tended rather to consider the eternal significance of these events than to ask themselves what the importance of these events was in the period when they occurred. Frederick only knew Machiavelli's *Principe*, and even that only in a French translation of 1696.[2] Whether the *Discorsi* would have brought him to take a more favourable view of Machiavelli, is certainly doubtful; for even they contained much of the poison which he abhorred, and by the contrast of their republican patriotism they might perhaps have aroused all the more his anger at the lack of character shown by Machiavelli in the *Principe*.[3]

But the unhistorical element in Frederick's method must be distinguished more precisely. Frederick was very well aware of the different times and political relationships amongst which Machiavelli lived, for he believed that progress in culture and morality had been made since then; and he looked upon Machiavelli's century as being in a condition of barbarism which had since been happily overcome. He realized that Machiavelli had only written for the small rulers, the *principini* of Italy; that at that time there had still not existed any *miles perpetuus* under strict discipline, but that on the contrary there was nothing much more than a mere rabble composed of bandits; that therefore Machiavelli's warnings about the unreliability of auxiliaries were a result of the times

[1] Letter to Voltaire, 16th May 1739, Koser and H. Droysen, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs d. Gr. mit Voltaire*, 1, 271.

[2] Cf. *Œuvres*, 8, xiv, and v. Sommerfeld, *Die äussere Entstehungsgeschichte des Antimachiavell Friedrichs d. Gr., Forsch. zur brand. u. preuss. Geschichte*, 29, 459.

[3] A few years earlier, the Leipzig Professor Johann Friedrich Christ, relying essentially on the *Discorsi*, had undertaken to cleanse the image of Machiavelli from the reproach of immorality, and to prove that he was a moderate monarchomach, a pioneer of political freedom (*De N. Machiavello libri tres*, 1731). This book, which attempted to save the honour of Machiavelli and was undertaken with considerable talent and understanding for the intellectual greatness of Machiavelli (even if also with inadequate resources), was apparently unknown to Frederick, and in any case, owing to its scholarly Latin form, he would have been unable to enjoy it.

—as also that his warnings against the rebelliousness of subjects could no longer be considered valid with reference to the profound tranquillity of present-day peoples. Machiavelli's whole world, he had to admit, was hardly recognizable today.[1] But this was an essential weakness in the contemporary conception of history—the fact that, while it did indeed study (and with an intensive interest) the changes in the external world, it was only superficially and in the most general terms that it considered the changes in the inner world, the real modes of thought pursued by men. And even the simple consideration, that the completely different external relationships of that time might perhaps demand from men a different type of action, was for the most part left out of account. For, in the opinion of the Enlightenment, the Moral Individual now passed as having an absolute importance which could justifiably be considered as valid for every period. It was from these sources that the misunderstandings of Frederick arose which we must now illustrate by means of a few examples.

Frederick was judging from the point of view of the well-ordered conditions of a State which had already begun to become a constitutional State in the modern sense. Machiavelli's State on the other hand was still at the stage of a crude authoritarianism, both from above and below; and it had enough to do to try and create for itself a reservoir of power which was universally respected, and not respected solely out of pure fear. Cesar Borgia's conduct (as recounted by Machiavelli) towards his representative in the Romagna, Ramiro d'Orco, who had become hated by the people, offers an example of this. He caused him to be executed in a horrible manner which simultaneously satisfied and dumbfounded the people. A state of law and order was thereby restored, and the subjects were won over to it by brutal illegal means. But Frederick's comment was: What right had the arch-murderer Borgia to punish this guilty criminal, who was indeed nothing but a copy of himself in miniature? [2] He was unwilling to admit to himself that even in this instance a ghastly kind of *raison d'état* was at work, and was struggling up out of the darkness into the light.

But most of all the special mode of thought pursued by Machiavelli and his period was unintelligible to Frederick. The eighteenth century had become too abstract to understand properly the more concrete concepts of the sixteenth century. There was need first for a synthesis between the conceptual mode of thought and the art of sympathetically understanding the life of others—the kind of synthesis which the historicism of the nineteenth century succeeded in creating—before one could come anywhere near understanding it. The eighteenth century was now engaged in creating general concepts and broad ideals, such as humanity, virtue, justice, the general welfare, the spirit of nations. It

[1] *Œuvres*, 8, 175, 206, 215, 222, 243. [2] P. 192.

accepted these without any concrete content, and enthused over them. Whereas the ethic of Machiavelli's period held much more firmly, in cases where it made use of the same words, to their concrete content and their application in individual instances. The objects it had in mind were more limited, but at the same time more plainly visible; and it still had fewer expressions applicable to the higher types of universal entity. Take a proposition such as the following one, used by Frederick in opposition to Machiavelli: 'Today everything is subordinated to the cause of justice, and the strength and military capability of a conqueror are hateful if they bring misfortune upon the human race.' [1] In Renaissance times such a statement would scarcely have been possible, not only by reason of its content, but also on account of its intellectual approach. Moreover when Machiavelli was thinking of something universal—and he certainly did so to a very great extent—he always preferred to express it by means of living comprehensible examples. His thought was also suffused by the spirit of the artistic advances of his day, whereas at the same time the greatness, beauty and charm of this art are founded on the special mentality of that period. But this was how it came about that Machiavelli's conceptual language—useless if one judges it by abstract logical terms, but splendid if one feels it in an individual manner—was no longer intelligible to Frederick. When, in the *Principe*, Machiavelli wanted to suggest his supreme aims, directed towards the complete regeneration of his fallen fatherland, he could find no better means than to refer to the sublime examples of Moses, Cyrus, Theseus and Romulus. The young Frederick took this to be mere *mauvaise foi*.[2]

Even those general concepts and ideals which Machiavelli certainly made use of were generally still rooted firmly in the soil of concrete fact. Out of the sensuous element of reality, full of contradiction and mingled with filth, there struggled up in him the higher element, still completely interwound with all that was lower. Nature and spirit were still so closely connected in him that even what was spiritual in him seemed to be a natural force. Most of all, this was true (as we saw earlier on) of his concept of *virtù*. How completely different—purer certainly, but also emptier—was the Enlightenment's conception of *vertu* which Frederick professed. It was, first and foremost, an ideal, a command, something that ought to exist. Machiavelli's *virtù* was a force, something that existed. As an ideal, *vertu* was eternal and timeless; Machiavelli's *virtù* was something earthly, but certainly also something which, with an obscure longing, he felt and believed to be imperishable in humanity. But he caused it to wander from nation to nation, vanishing here and then blazing up there. Virtue perishes, he said, when the opportunity to implement it is lacking. This criminal, Frederick commented on this,

[1] P. 170. [2] P. 185.

talks about virtue, and yet only means by it the skill of a rogue, who needs a favourable moment to demonstrate it.[1]

It is quite curious and remarkable that Machiavelli's strictly inductive and empirical method, which refused to let itself be blinded by any illusions about 'that which ought to exist', made so little impression on Frederick, who even as a young man already had in him the basis of his future sober sense of reality. Frederick even reproached Machiavelli with it. Why, he asked,[2] does he begin by describing the differences between monarchical States, instead of going back to the original source of things and investigating the origin of royal power and the reasons which could have caused men to subordinate themselves to a master. In his actions Frederick was at that time an empiricist and a realist, but in his thought he was influenced by the universalism of the Enlightenment, and he never fully got over this duality. And since the causal, just as much as the ethical, thought of the Enlightenment was dominated by this abstract universalism, he had no attention to spare for modern man's strongly felt desire for causal analysis, which was already breaking through in the naked empiricism of Machiavelli. So it came about that the latter seemed to him paltry and of secondary importance. Swept up by the Enlightenment towards the highest principles, he conceived Man as he ought to be according to the ideal of humanity; and he demanded of the ruler that he should even look upon true glory as being simply 'a puff of smoke', and he became angered by the bestial element in Man, which in the case of Machiavelli appeared to be very closely interwoven with his *virtù*. He was even wounded by Machiavelli's remark: 'Whoever believes that good actions on the part of great rulers will cause their old evil deeds to be forgotten, is only deceiving himself.'[3]

All this has to be said in order to make it possible to understand why the forceful political basis of truth in Machiavelli's *Principe*, the discovery of the element of necessity in political conduct (and this is nothing else, succinctly expressed, than the essence of *raison d'état*), remained invisible to the very ruler in whom this *raison d'état* was due to find its most complete embodiment. He certainly realized very well that Machiavelli was trying to demonstrate the existence of this kind of coercive force which could serve as a great general all-explaining principle in the political sphere. 'Everything is achieved by interest in Machiavelli, just as whirlwinds signify everything in Descartes.'[4] Interest was his sole god, his daemon. But in Machiavelli this interest was clothed in too unfamiliar and too dirty a dress for him to be able to recognize it. The unfamiliarity of the conceptual language and the

[1] P. 188. [2] P. 167.

[3] P. 194. In the process however (misled by the translation) he confused *personnaggi grandi* with *grands hommes*.

[4] P. 168; cf. also pp. 181, 232, 241.

crudity of the period which enveloped it, we have already assessed. But there were two other things that made it distasteful to him in the form in which Machiavelli presented it. First, that in Machiavelli there still seemed to be no distinction between the interest of the ruler and that of the State. It could not very well have been otherwise, because the modern State in Italy developed out of the *stato*, the power-apparatus of the ruler, and because the specifically dynastic interest here seemed to be particularly sharp and egotistical where one was not concerned with old and hallowed dynasties, but with new ones that had arisen by usurpation. And secondly, it was only the interest of small rulers and States, not great ones, which Machiavelli seemed to be expressing in his *Principe*, and for which he seemed to be claiming dominion over all moral values. But from the very beginning Frederick had despised the small princely States,[1] because he thought in an undynastic manner and purely along the lines of the State itself. And what he saw of the small States in Germany could only strengthen this disdain in him. At the very least, he held it to be a fundamental rule of all politics that large and small States had to be treated according to very different rules. All his life he was really only interested in the relations and vital conditions of large States.

At the same time there was also a link joining him to Machiavelli—not to the instructor of the *principini*, with all the limitations of his period, but rather to the timeless advocate of the idea of the power-State. And there was also another invisible link between Frederick's humanitarian idea and his idea of the power-State. Only a large State could promote the happiness of humanity on a grand scale. And he even said in the *Antimachiavell*, that today only important rulers were capable of making war! [2] In the first instance, he considered this to be based only on material and technical causes. But, once the fact had been recognized, he found himself forced back again further into the sphere of considerations of power politics, a sphere which he had already handled with great skill in the *Considérations*. And if, in the *Antimachiavell*, he tried to narrow this sphere as much as possible, he still had no intention whatsoever of following in the footsteps of the Abbé St. Pierre and of banishing it from the world altogether.

One almost has the impression that, during the course of working on his book, it brought him once again more strongly under its spell. The word *intérêt*, which at the beginning is used chiefly as a term of contempt for the petty egoism of Machiavelli's *principini*, often re-appears in the later chapters in a good sense, as applied to truly national and universal interests.[3] This reminds one of the fact that Frederick's ethics in general, both then and later, derived virtue from interest, from a

[1] Cf. pp. 209, 222, 235 f. [2] P. 210.

[3] Cf. with the passages quoted above (in *A.*), pp. 266, 274, 275, 291, 297.

properly controlled and correctly understood self-love.[1] His own moral conduct came to extend beyond this somewhat exiguous foundation, but his sensualist theory unmistakably created a new link with Machiavellism. Moreover at the beginning of the book the important and difficult concept of 'necessity' also appears, as the 'evil necessity' of political action, the concept that had formerly produced Machiavelli's doctrines; then in the later parts of the book he uses it more frequently.[2] He distinguished between the conqueror 'from necessity' and the conqueror by temperament, and conceded true glory to the former, if he made use of his talents to maintain true justice. He compared him with surgeons, who by means of their 'barbaric' operations save men from a danger that threatens them. In short, he sought for and desired 'just grounds' for war and power politics.

This was the old doctrine of the *bellum justum* and the compromise between ethics and *raison d'état*, with which he had reassured himself in the *Considérations*. He had in view his own future conduct when he spoke of the glory of that type of ruler who 'maintained by means of firmness, wisdom and the warlike virtues those rights, which someone wishes to wrest from him by injustice and usurpation'.[3] For (so he argued, with a sense of reality unaffected by any ideal of the Enlightenment) kings were not judged by any tribunals that were capable of deciding their differences, their rights and the importance of their claims. And it was not only in the case of conflicting claims of right or (as was self-evident) for the defence of one's own country that he considered it permissible and just to draw the sword. The importance of the European balance of power was capable, in his opinion, of justifying even offensive wars: 'preventive wars, if an overpowering increase in the strongest European powers threatens to overflow and swallow up the whole universe'. He expressly recognized the maxim that *praevenire* was better than *praeveniri*. 'Great men have always done well, when they made use of their power before their enemies reached a position where they could tie their hands and destroy their power.'[4]

And how did it stand with the central problem of Machiavellian politics, the doctrine that treaties were only to be kept just so long as they served the interests of the State? Frederick asserted that this was indeed basically a bad and villainous policy, 'for one only has to make

[1] Zeller, *Friedrich d. Gr. als Philosoph*, pp. 70 ff. '*Le principe primitif de la vertu est l'intérêt*', to Voltaire, 25th Dec. 1737, Koser and H. Droysen, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs d. Gr. mit Voltaire* 1, 120.

[2] Pp. 172, 249, 295, 297. [3] P. 218.

[4] Pp. 296 and 139. On the basis of v. Sommerfeld's assertions in *Forsch. z. brand. u. preuss. Gesch.*, 29, 468, it was already seen to be highly probable that the more subtle grasp of the doctrine of the preventive war in the Voltairean version of the *Anti-machiavell* did not proceed from Voltaire (as is assumed by Heydmann, *Histor. Vierteljahrschr.*, 1922, 70), but on the contrary was produced by Frederick himself.

one deception of this kind, and one loses the confidence of every ruler'. And yet he felt himself obliged to add (impelled by an obscure and strong premonition of coming events) that unfortunate situations of necessity (*nécessités fâcheuses*) did occur, in which a ruler was forced to break treaties and alliances. In any case, this had to be done in a proper manner; the ruler must immediately inform his allies, and it was only permissible for him to do it 'if the safety of his people and a very great necessity obliged him to'.[1] This was the first attempt (and in the young Frederick it seems a surprisingly naïve and useless attempt) to solve this problem which was to occupy him through his entire life. All the different answers to it which he gave both now and later were swings of the pendulum between Machiavellism and Antimachiavellism, between the ideals of the Enlightenment and the reality of the power-State. With a genuine naïvety the author of the *Antimachiavell* even expressed that very dualism which was already inherent in the life of the State itself: namely, that while the inner part of him was already striving towards the constitutional State with its moral associations, the external part of him was still tied to the natural laws of the struggle for existence. When he came to speak of choosing servants for the State, he noted without contradiction the practice of wise rulers in making use of respectable characters for the internal administration, but using the more lively and fiery personalities for diplomatic dealings; for in this latter sphere, where it was necessary to use intrigue *and often corruption too*, skill and spirit were obviously more useful than uprightness.[2] He certainly also acknowledged similar principles later, in his Political Testaments; [3] but there they have the appearance of cautious maxims of experience, as if he were taking a severely wide view, whereas in the *Antimachiavell* on the contrary they seem like a separate element adrift among thought-processes which are really of an entirely different character.

But this did succeed in marring the basic idea of the book, which was to demonstrate the possibility of meeting the demands of morality over the whole sphere of State life. His programme, which was to act as wisely as a serpent and as innocently as a dove,[4] was one that he did not dare, even in theory, to carry out completely.

In the last resort, the difference between him and Machiavelli was thereby weakened from one of principle to one of degree; so that the

[1] P. 248 f.; cf. pp. 208, 282, 292, 297. In 1735 he had already written to Grumbkow: *Conserver son honneur et s'il le faut, ne tromper qu'une fois de ses jours, et cela dans une occasion des plus pressantes, c'est la fin et le grand art de la politique.* Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs d. Gr. mit Grumbkow und Maupertuis*, p. 124; cf. also p. 121.

[2] P. 274.

[3] *Polit. Testamente*, pp. 54 ff. and 216 ff.

[4] Cf. p. 346: 'The world is a game of cards, where cheats and honest players are sitting side by side. A ruler must get to know the tricks of the cheats, not in order to use them himself, but in order not to be duped by them.' So too on p. 294.

measure of cunning and deception which had flourished during the Renaissance was greatly lessened by the more civilized and morally sensitive spirit of the eighteenth century, but not entirely removed. This danger inherent in his point of view, by which the tiger of Machiavellism could be changed into a pleasant domestic cat, was apparently not fully appreciated by Frederick at that time.

Nevertheless Machiavelli also offered a whole series of rules of statecraft which were morally unobjectionable and which Federick found altogether illuminating. His advice to the Prince, to rule personally, to act as his own commander in the field, to accommodate himself to the situation, to despise flatterers, to ascertain the secret intentions of other rulers, and so forth, entirely coincided with his own ideas and certainly helped to bring his political thought to fruition at that time.[1]

Thus the *Antimachiavell* as a whole, taken together with the *Considérations*, reveals in its symbolism the interplay of two streams of quite a different colour, that of a constraining destiny and that of his own inner inclination, both forced to flow in the same bed, where they gradually have to accommodate themselves to one another.

* * *

Frederick was soon to experience that the man of action may be led beyond the boundaries which the man of thought has set up for himself. If one were to take his move to conquer Silesia, to the '*rendez-vous* with glory', the territorial claims which he presented to Maria Theresa, the attitude he took up towards his allies at the conclusion of the Convention of Kleinschnellendorf and the two Peaces of Breslau and Dresden, and if one were to measure these by the standards which he himself laid down at the close of the *Considérations* and in the *Antimachiavell*, then a number of objections could be raised. It is true that he was entirely convinced of the justice of his claim to the greater part of Silesia. But was it really this conviction of right that actually determined his decision? Was it not much more the knowledge that (as he himself expressed it) this acquisition was also 'very useful to the House of Brandenburg'? [2] It must be admitted that here Frederick—as in all other instances where he relied upon the 'rights' of his House, which derived from inheritances, privileges and so forth—was making use of parts of that dynastic and territorial system which he had really banished from his mind, and which his own idea of the State had left

[1] Cf. Zeller, *Friedrich d. Gr. als Philosoph*, p. 94 f., and Madsack, *Der Antimachiavell*, pp. 99 ff.

[2] *Polit. Korrespondenz*, 1, 90. In the first version of the *Histoire de mon temps* of 1743 (of which only fragments remain) it says: *L'ambition, l'intérêt, le désir de faire parler de moi l'emportèrent, et la guerre fut résolue.* H. Droysen, *Beitr. zu einer Bibliographie der prosaischen Schriften Friedrichs d. Gr.*, 2, 30. Cf. also Koser, *Geschichte Friedrichs d. Gr.*, 5th ed., 1, 253. In the *Histoire de la guerre de sept ans*

behind.[1] He was giving himself moral reassurance by invoking these 'rights' and (in accordance with the practice of the time) was using them to cover up the motive which really impelled him and which he himself described as *droit de bienséance*. The complicated legal question had not been studied by him with any care when he began the enterprise. This (as he remarked on 7th November 1740) was the concern of ministers: it is time to work on the matter secretly, for the troops have been given their orders. This was the commanding voice of *raison d'état*. Henceforth it ran right through his whole political correspondence. If one had nothing but this correspondence, then one would know very little about that other world of his spirit or about the cleavages and contradictions of his inner will. Once he had taken his place by the humming loom of politics his hand was guided by nothing else but the power-interest of his State and the heroic ambition of protecting it. And yet, on drawing breath for the first time after the chaos of the first Silesian War, he wrote to his friends on 18th June 1742, from the camp at Kuttenberg: 'You might cure all the ills of war, but I tell you candidly that you will not have achieved anything, if you cannot banish two frightful things from this world—interest and ambition.' [2]

Here, as so often happened with him, a passionate feeling broke through the phraseology of the Enlightenment. As a functionary of the Prussian State interest, he felt himself bound, and perhaps even really carried away, by the daemonic spirit that drove him on. For this daemon was certainly dualistic itself, and signified not only something quite objective and material, not only the need for life on the part of his State, but also something subjective and personal—ambition, the desire for glory, and pleasure in power—in fact all the things which as a philosopher and a man of intellect he was obliged to condemn, and had indeed condemned so violently in Machiavelli. Now he was forced to perceive that the man of action loses his conscience. It remained true at the same time that 'interest' was a living force, in which clean and unclean constituents were blended together; and that all attempts to purify it, though not indeed quite ineffectual, can never be crowned with complete success. A residue of human and egotistical motives is left in everything, even the most matter-of-fact State conduct.

(*Œuvres*, 4, 25) it says later: *Quand les souverains veulent en venir à une rupture, ce n'est pas la matière du manifeste qui les arrête; ils prennent leur parti, ils font la guerre et ils laissent à quelque juris consulte le soin de les justifier*. Cf. also *Œuvres*, 9, 81 f.

[1] This has already been suggested by Fechner, *Friedrichs d. Gr. Theorie der auswärtigen Politik, Programm des Breslauer Johannisgymnasiums*, 1876, pp. 11 ff.

[2] To Jordan, *Œuvres*, 17, 229; and also to Voltaire, 18th June 1742; Koser and Droysen, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs d. Gr. mit Voltaire*, 2, 130. Many similar observations in Fechner, *loc. cit.*, pp. 20 ff. Cf. also Paul-Dubois, *Frédéric le Grand d'après sa correspondance politique*, p. 134.

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Frederick was indeed obliged to express this realization rather differently, in accordance with the thought of his period and his own personality. Honest with himself and a 'born enemy of lies',[1] he found no other way of expressing it than by giving himself up to the moment, and (exactly as he had done in the *Considérations* and *Antimachiavell* when he was crown prince) surveyed his own conduct now from this, not from that point of view of his divergent world of ideas. This was how it was in the Confessions of 1742 and 1743, in a letter to Jordan of 15th June 1742, and in the *Avant-propos* written a year later for the first printing of the *Histoire de mon temps*.[2] The first Confession was intended for contemporaries, in order to justify himself for having left his French ally in the lurch, when he made the separate Peace of Breslau. The second was intended for posterity, and therefore expressed his inner duality in a manner that was more direct and less obscured by arbitrary prejudice. The first went further along the lines of the *Antimachiavell*, but in a more mature and practical way. I am vindicated (he more or less says here) by the necessities of the situation, in which I am bound to fear that at the first failure I shall be forsaken by the most powerful of my allies, and by continuing the war I shall lose my conquests and plunge my people into ruin. And for the first time he distinguished sharply between the ethic of the private individual and the duty of the ruler, which was to subordinate his personal advantage to the welfare of the community—'he must sacrifice himself'. At the same time, with his simile of the gambler hastily retiring from play after making a big win, he certainly revealed that his own conduct actually partook of other more natural motives.

But is it really possible to separate in his conduct the motives of sacrificial feelings for State morality on the one hand, and the ordinary shrewdness of a gambler on the other? They coalesced to form that obscure constraining force of political action which is chiefly nourished by the elemental impulses of self-preservation, the strongest roots of *raison d'état*. The solution here was that one had to choose between being the hammer or the anvil. If I refrain from duping others, then I shall be duped by my ally who is physically superior to me and will have no compunction about ill-treating me—this was the strongest of the considerations that impelled him to conclude the Convention of Kleinschnellendorf and the separate Peace of Breslau. We need not consider now whether his actions then, when measured by the standard of pure utility, were politically expedient and did not perhaps in some respects cut both ways; for we are concerned here with the essential nature of his *raison d'état*, and not with its direct results. But this resolve of Frederick's—to behave in a Machiavellian world in a Machiavellian

[1] *Réfutation*, *Œuvres*, 8, 277.

[2] *Œuvres*, 17, 226, and especially Küntzel, *Polit. Testamente der Hohenzollern*, 2, 85.

manner himself—sprang forth complete and instantaneously under the hammer-blows of this world, like Minerva from the head of Zeus. *Soyons donc fourbes*, he wrote to his minister Podewils,[1] with a real contempt for this world that forced him to act in this way, and yet also with a bitter decisiveness.

And this was also how he wanted at that time to be viewed by posterity. 'I hope', he wrote in the *Avant-propos* to the *Histoire de mon temps* of 1743, 'that the posterity I am writing for will distinguish the philosopher in me from the ruler, and the respectable man from the politician. I must confess that it is very hard to maintain purity and uprightness if one is caught up in the great political maelstrom of Europe. One sees oneself continually in danger of being betrayed by one's allies, forsaken by one's friends, brought low by envy and jealousy; and ultimately one finds oneself obliged to choose between the terrible alternatives of sacrificing one's people or one's word of honour.

'Of all States, from the smallest to the biggest, one can safely say that the fundamental rule of government is the principle of extending their territories. This passion is as deeply rooted in every ministry as universal despotism is in the Vatican.

'The passions of rulers have no other curb but the limits of their power. Those are the fixed laws of European politics to which every politician submits. If a ruler were to tend his own interests less carefully than his neighbours, then the latter would only grow stronger; and it would leave him more virtuous but also weaker. . . . To tell the truth, treaties are only affirmations of deception and faithlessness.' [2]

With this he returned to the naturalistic point of view of the *Considérations*, abandoned the attempt of the *Antimachiavell* (which had not been entirely consistent even then) to subordinate power politics to the ideals of the Enlightenment, and quite simply recognized the uncompromising duality of both worlds, the autonomous character of power politics. With a sublime honesty he confessed himself guilty of the same things that he had condemned in the *Antimachiavell* with an indignation that was just as honest. The sun of the Enlightenment—as he was now obliged to admit to himself—had not yet succeeded in overcoming the night of barbarism in politics. He now said (though not with any excess of confidence) that it would be able to sooner or later. He remarked with an undertone of resignation, and as a man who wishes rather than believes: 'One *must* believe that a more enlightened

[1] *S'il y a à gagner à être honnête homme, nous le serons, et s'il faut duper, soyons donc fourbes*, 12th May 1741. *Polit. Korresp.*, 1, 245. Similar remarks at this period: *Trompez les trompeurs* (*ibid.*, 225) and *Dupons les plutot que d'être dupe*. Cf. Koser, in the *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie*, 1908, p. 66.

[2] Cf. also the proclamation to Podewils in the Hague, 28th Feb. 1745, *Polit. Korresp.*, 4, 67 ff., and Koser in the *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 43, 97 ff.

time will one day come, when *bonne foi* will receive the glory to which it is entitled.' The actual historical presages on which he based this hope (of which he made a duty) were confined to the perfectly correct, but not very important observation that such crude and obvious methods of power politics as had been customary in earlier periods would today arouse fierce indignation among civilized contemporaries.

The same youthful radicalism suffuses the writings of the period when he was crown prince, and the *Avant-propos* of 1743. The latter also contained the remembered trepidation of the first war full of disturbing decisions and changing circumstances. This mental disturbance led to an extreme ruthlessness of confession. Precisely through this he now also revealed that he had no thought whatsoever of withdrawing from the moral world. Its laws were valid for him more widely, not only in this one sphere which seemed to him to be separated from it by an unbridgeable gulf. And because he felt and wanted to act in a moral manner on a wider basis, the sentiments underlying the *Antimachiavell* were also capable of blazing up in him again from time to time.[1] But, in spite of the very deliberate and reflective manner in which he later came to treat once more the question of keeping treaties, his fundamental position with respect to the phenomenon of power politics never altered. It was, and henceforth remained for him, something unalterably elemental and natural, which from a practical point of view left one no other course but to howl with the wolves. In his Political Testament of 1752, he even broke expressly with the fundamental thesis of the *Antimachiavell.*[2] 'Machiavelli says that a disinterested power which finds itself in the middle of ambitious powers will be bound to come to grief sooner or later. This has troubled me, but I am bound to confess that Machiavelli is right.' And sixteen years later, after his great struggles for power and existence were ended, he advised his successor: 'Keep it firmly fixed in your mind, that there is no great ruler who does not cherish the idea of extending his dominion.' [3]

His words of 1752 were of course followed by the further statement: 'Rulers must of necessity possess ambition, but this ambition must be wise, moderate and enlightened by reason.' One may perhaps discern here a certain ethical tendency; but in the main it was intended more as a rationalization of power politics than as an attempt to make it ethical. It was not the Reason of the eighteenth century (which he professed as a philosopher) that he was thinking of here, so much as the 'Goddess

[1] Cf. with this *Œuvres*, 15, 138 (1760), and 24, 322 (Letter to the Electoral Princess of Saxony, 29th May 1779).

[2] P. 59.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, p. 200. Cf. also his remark to the Electoral Princess of Saxony, 2nd Dec. 1763; *La jurisprudence des souverains est ordinairement le droit du plus fort. Œuvres*, 24, 56.

Reason' whom Richelieu had already raised to the place of mistress of politics [1] and who really signified nothing else but the principle of the highest expediency. Frederick had entered upon the first Silesian War with the ambition of joining battle with the masters of cabinet politics, and playing a more skilful game than any of them. This shows itself chiefly in the complications of the very different lines of thought which led him to conclude the Convention of Kleinschnellendorf in 1742 with the Austrians and thereby free the House of Austria from serious danger. But this very Convention and the two separate peaces of Breslau and Dresden had also weakened his political credit as a reliable ally. They produced the very result which Frederick himself, in the *Antimachiavell*, had already predicted as a probable consequence of breaking treaties. Frederick inferred from this that the method of breaking treaties must only be used very sparingly and with extreme caution. In the two *Avant-propos* to the *Histoire de mon temps* of 1743 and 1746 (quite bluntly in the first, and somewhat more moderately in the second) he had been content to justify breach of agreement in general as an indispensable method of statecraft; whereas in later discussions of the question, in the Political Testaments of 1752 and 1768, and in the *Avant-propos* to the third edition of the *Histoire* in 1775, he had striven hard to limit this dangerous method and to restrict its use to definite cases of necessity. He was rather like a doctor, who to begin with had made use unthinkingly of a certain remedy, and then, being taken aback by its two-edged effects, would only continue using it afterwards subject to definite precautions and reservations.

'It is only permissible', he remarked in 1752,[2] 'to break treaties for important reasons. You may be led to do it, if you fear that your allies will conclude a separate peace of their own, and if you have the time and means to anticipate them; or if lack of money prevents you from continuing the war; or finally if important advantages are to be derived from it. But strokes of this kind can only be made once, or at the most twice, in one's life; they are not remedies to which one can have recourse every day.'

'It is a very important question,' he said in 1768,[3] 'that of deciding when it is permissible to carry out a so-called great *coup d'état*—I am watering down the expression, I really mean when it is permissible to deceive others. Those who consider this legitimate base their opinion on the view that, since one had only made one's agreements with knaves and scoundrels, it is permissible to pay them in their own coin. But others believe that scoundrels do in fact discredit themselves, and that even Cardinal Mazarin made a serious political mistake by playing the rogue in small matters as well as in great. In my opinion, one ought to depart as little as possible from fair dealing. When one sees that another

[1] Cf. above, p. 167. [2] P. 76. [3] P. 212.

ruler has left the path of Right, then one is undoubtedly justified in serving him in the same way; and if there are cases where it is excusable to neglect one's obligations, then those are cases where the safety or greater welfare of the State demand it.'

And finally, in 1775: [1] 'The rulers must always be guided by the interest of the State. The instances in which alliances may be broken are the following: 1. If one's ally neglects his obligations, or 2. If he is thinking of deceiving you, and you have no course but to forestall him; 3. If you are obliged by *force majeure* to break your treaties, and finally, 4. Lack of means to continue the war—for accursed money influences everything in a fatal manner. Rulers are the slaves of their resources, the interest of the State is their law, and this law may not be infringed.'

For the moment we need not consider the gradual but significant variations and increasingly subtle modifications in this casuistical reasoning. It has been said,[2] that to a certain extent Frederick finally returned here to the point of view of the *Antimachiavell*; that in the last resort he believed the wisest course was to recognize the validity of moral obligations in principle, but to lay down certain exceptions based on necessity. Certainly in these three later discussions of the subject, in contrast to the almost completely naturalistic approach of the *Avant-propos* of 1743, there is a re-appearance of the moral demand that loyalty to treaties should basically and in general be maintained, but in a different context and on different grounds. In the *Antimachiavell* the moral demand arose from a broad moral basis; and even the limiting reservation of necessity, which the politically-versed heir to the throne cautiously included, was still provided with a marvellous and very unpractical moral garment to cover its nakedness. But the three discussions of the subject in 1752, 1768 and 1775 were based on grounds of State utility. The moral requirement to abide by treaties is recognized as a basic rule because it is wise and expedient, and because *raison d'état* itself demands it. In the *Avant-propos* of 1743, the philosopher and the politician in him had resignedly parted company and gone their own ways. Now the politician could offer the philosopher his hand once again, and assure him that his own reasoned needs would keep him in the vicinity of the philosopher; and that he would be only too glad to remain there, but that he would have to leave at once, if *force majeure* or a greater advantage for the State should call him over to the terrain of Machiavelli.

If one compares once again the three stages in the development of his doctrines of treaty-faith and treaty-breach, then one certainly sees that

[1] *Œuvres*, 2, xxv. Cf. too Meusel, *Friedrich d. Gr. als historisch-polit. Schriftsteller*, *Preuss. Jahrbücher*, 120, 505.

[2] Hintze, *Friedrich d. Gr. nach dem 7 jährigen Krieg u. d. polit. Testament von 1768*, *Forschungen zur brand. u. preuss. Geschichte*, 32, 26; cf. also Meusel, *loc. cit.*, 512.

they are governed by something of Hegel's dialectical law. Each of the earlier stages is 'neutralized' in the following one; that is to say, it is not overcome but continues to operate, and the third stage (though not, by any means, simply returning to the first) does however approach it once more, impelled by the forces of the second stage itself. But the pleasant feeling of having at last reached a harmonious sense of 'for itself' in the idea, will not be produced; for even here the old conflict between morality and power politics seems only to have been solved in a superficial and utilitarian way, and not really solved.

There is however one other line of development in the different discussions of the matter by Frederick which we have reproduced; this is a line which up to now we have left on one side, but we must now bring it forward in the hope that it will help us to penetrate to the inner sphere of the problem. In this line of development too there is a compromise between the elements of power and of the Enlightenment, of the ideal and the elemental; and they seem to be in such close contact with one another, that it is here that one generally thinks to find the point of harmonious union in Frederick's world of ideas—that point of union which seems to be within reach at every stage of Frederick's development. He did indeed always try to find a more profound basis for breach of treaty than that of the merely naturalistic motive that it was necessary to howl with the wolves. In the *Antimachiavell*, besides the indeterminately obscure, but forceful concept of a 'very great necessity', which would justify the ruler in breaking treaties, he also emphasized a regard for the 'safety of his peoples' which might oblige him to do so. In 1742, after the deed was accomplished, he cried: 'Ought I to plunge my people into misery?' The basic principle, which he now laid down, that the ruler 'was obliged to sacrifice' himself and his private ethics for the sake of his people, was interwoven with the otherwise entirely naturalistic *Avant-propos* of 1743, and was given a calm and basic discussion in the second *Avant-propos* of 1746. A private individual, it says here, must keep his word under all circumstances, 'for honour comes before self-interest. But a ruler who binds himself under an obligation does not bind himself alone, otherwise he would be in the situation of a private individual. It is much more true that he exposes great States and great provinces to a thousand dangers of misfortune. It is therefore better that he breaks his agreement, than that his people should perish'.[1] He attempted to make this evident by means of an image he had already used in the *Antimachiavell*: [2] Would a surgeon not seem to be acting in a laughably scrupulous way, if he thought of hesitating about cutting off the gangrened arm of a man? In the *Avant-propos* to the *Histoire de mon temps* of 1775, which was carefully re-fashioned and adapted to his

[1] *Histoire* of 1746, *Publikationen aus den K. preuss. Staatsarchiven*, 4, 155.
[2] *Œuvres*, 8, 172.

more mature mood, he did indeed omit this crude comparison, but he repeated the question: 'Is it better that the nation should perish, or that the ruler should break his agreement?' The ruler must 'sacrifice his person for the safety of his subjects'.[1]

Curiously enough, no one has so far taken into account the fact that these formulations bear a tinge which is specifically humanitarian and characteristic of the Enlightenment, nor has anyone considered the critical questions arising out of this. The purpose of the State, as laid down by the Enlightenment and conceived by it in the spirit of individualism—that of promoting the human happiness of its subjects—was indeed utilized in this respect to justify a serious breach of individual ethics. Thus, the thesis which had to be proved and the foundation on which the proof rested each sprang from heterogeneous spheres. Was this not capable of destroying the internal validity of the argument? In other words, taking everything as a whole, was it really possible to prove the breaking of treaties—that keystone of pure and absolute power policy and *raison d'état*—was an indispensable means for securing the human happiness of one's subjects? And particularly, moreover, when restricted to those rare instances of emergency which Frederick was from time to time concerned with working out?

In many instances this was certainly possible. The conclusion of a separate peace, made possible by breaking a treaty, such as those of Breslau and Dresden, certainly spared one's own subjects further war losses and untold miseries—though in these and similar cases it would always remain doubtful whether it actually was this humanitarian motive that gave the first impulse towards the decision to break the treaty. Moreover Frederick was able to plead (and in fact frequently did plead [2]) that power policy, by virtue of the fact that it ensured the territorial stability of the State, did also ensure the physical means for making the subjects happy. 'If the ruler loses certain provinces, he is no longer in the same position as before to help his subjects.' This was also felt very strongly and personally by Frederick, who in domestic affairs was trying to carry on a patriarchal policy of welfare. Indeed, humanitarian motives could even become valid as a reason for acquiring new provinces which were indispensable for the material well-being of the State as a whole. But, in the process, was that pressing necessity always paramount—that necessity which ought always to exist as a *conditio sine qua non* of any breach of treaty? Was it not possible (if the humanitarian motive were really being given the preference) for the provinces that were being threatened or claimed to live just as peacefully and happily under the rule of a different sceptre? To a pure representative of

[1] *Œuvres*, 2, xxvi f.

[2] *Essai sur les formes de gouvernement*, *Œuvres*, 9, 200; *Lettres sur l'amour de la patrie* (1779), *Œuvres*, 9, 221.

the Enlightenment it ought to be a matter of complete indifference which State this or that province belonged to, inasmuch as he would be concerned solely with the welfare of his subjects. Thus in his *Antimachiavell* Frederick had conceded throughout that it was not permissible to base the acquisition at least of new provinces on humanitarian aims. 'The new conquests of a ruler do not make the States already in his possession either more opulent or more rich; his peoples do not profit in any way from these conquests.' [1] One might well have asked him whether his old original provinces and his Silesia could not have flourished just as well under Saxon and Austrian rule. As a great ruler, it would have been permissible for him to deny the suggestion with all the force of historical truth. But as a thinker who had at his disposal only the intellectual methods of his own time, he would have been placed in an embarrassing position. In 1793 Fichte, whose political beginnings belonged entirely to the Enlightenment, demanded sarcastically whether it was of such great importance to the German artist or the German peasant, that in future the artist and peasant from Alsace and Lorraine should find his city and his village listed in geographical textbooks under the heading of the German Empire. In short, the individualistic and essentially unpolitical ethic of the Enlightenment was of no use whatsoever for the purpose for which Frederick sought to use it when he based the *raison d'état* of breach of treaty (and hence also power policy, as a whole) on the welfare and happiness of the subjects. At least, it was only by introducing inconsistencies that they could be made usable for this purpose. Their real implication was towards the pacificism of St. Pierre.

It is therefore noteworthy that Frederick himself, in his later remarks on the subject of breaking treaties, in addition to the mode of expression still current from the Enlightenment—the mode that spoke of the happiness of the people and of the subjects as the supreme value—also found another different, better and more meaningful expression for what he felt so strongly. Now indeed it was simply the State itself that appeared in places where he would hitherto have spoken of the peoples or the subjects. 'The safety and greater good of the *State*' demands (so says the Testament of 1768) 'that treaties should be broken under certain circumstances'. The *Avant-propos* of 1775 has an even sharper ring. 'The interest of the *State*', it says in the opening of the passage concerning treaty-breach, 'must serve as a rule for those who are governing. . . . This law is sacred.' Thus was discovered the only possible basis that was capable of justifying both the right to break a

[1] *Ibid.*, 8, 171. This idea, which was characteristic of the Enlightenment, that lawful territorial claims could not by themselves constitute a morally justifiable motive for war (since it in no way affected the happiness of the subjects whether they belonged to one ruler or another) was in fact very widespread at the time. Cf. (de Lavie), *Des corps politiques*, 1766, vol. 2, 136.

treaty, in case of need, and power-policy. The State, as an individual living entity, was able to claim the right, in order to preserve itself in a case of emergency, to make use of measures which were condemned by the ethic which applied to the separate individual. The State, moreover, was something different from what the Enlightenment had understood by 'people' and 'subjects'. At this time it still stood (and this again was different from the position it held in the nineteenth century) beside and above the people; but nor was it any longer the mere power-apparatus of a dynasty, on the contrary it was a great living unity which, even if it had been created by dynastic means, had grown up above it. Once again we must recall the characteristic fact that Frederick had very largely eliminated the dynastic idea from the conception of the vocation of a ruler. From the very outset he instinctively felt himself to be the instrument of a higher greatness. In the *Antimachiavell* he still called himself the 'first servant (*domestique*) of his peoples'; [1] later there also appeared the phrase 'first servant of the State'.[2] At first sight the earlier draft may strike one as being more modern and national in tone than the second; but in fact, as we now see, it was not. For this 'people' was nothing more than population; it did not yet stand for any real people or nation; as a concept it was not yet felt in any individual or historical manner, but on the contrary only as being purely humanitarian and rationalist. This very transition from 'people' to 'State' in Frederick's mode of thinking and expressing himself does indicate a movement in the direction of modern thought, and also towards the modern national State. It represents a movement towards modern thought, because it led on to a recognition of one of those great vital unities which were no longer capable of being conceived in a rationalist manner but had to be grasped historically: the ability to understand such unities is one of the chief characteristics of the modern mind. On the other hand it represents a movement towards the modern State, because it was Frederick's State that first created the fixed and definite form within which it was possible for a mere population to become welded together into a real people and nation with its own vital will.

The Enlightenment's ideal of humanity had grown up as the ideal of the rational individual, which looked upon the reason inherent in the

[1] In Voltaire's 2nd edition of the *Antimachiavell* this was changed to *magistrat*. Cf. Heydemann, *Friedrichs d. Gr. Antimachiavell, Histor. Vierteljahrschr.*, 1922, p. 66. It is possible (see above p. 276, n. 5) that Voltaire did not make this alteration on his own authority, but that on the contrary it was based on one of Frederick's own manuscripts.

[2] This was first, in 1747, *premier serviteur et premier magistrat de l'Etat* (*Œuvres*, 1, 123); in 1752 it was *premier serviteur de l'Etat* (*Polit. Testamente*, p. 38); in 1757 *premier ministre* (*du peuple*) (*Œuvres*, 27, 3, 279); in 1766 *premier magistrat de la nation* (*Œuvres*, 24, 109); in 1777 *premier serviteur de l'Etat* (*Œuvres*, 9, 197 and 208). Cf. Zeller, *Friedrich d. Gr. als Philosoph*, p. 241 f

individual as universally valid; it embraced the whole world universally with this reason, and was consequently incapable of understanding completely the historical and political intermediate-power of the State entity, and was only able in practice to let it operate and pass as valid. It was this that gave rise to the former harsh dualism in Frederick between the philosopher and the ruler. But life and experience taught him more and more to recognize the State as a pre-eminent and constraining vital force, a collective entity which not only guided the ruler but also conditioned and embraced the happiness of the subjects, of the people. It was life and experience, rather than rational thought, that led him on in this way to the threshold of the nineteenth century. His discernment sprang from the innermost essence of *raison d'état* itself, from a sense of what was necessary.[1]

The transition from 'people' to 'State' thus signified the transition from a humanitarian and moral ideology of power-policy to that other historical and political ideology of power-policy which afterwards came to be developed chiefly in nineteenth-century Germany. But together with it, as we have observed, the former humanitarian ideology still remained alive in Frederick right up to the end of his life. We have come to know well enough the shortcomings and discrepancies in this ideology. But one must not on this account overlook the historical force and significance that it bore. This ideology was very far from succeeding in making the State completely moral, but it did succeed in giving it a very much more moral tenor than hitherto. The victory of Machiavelli over Anti-Machiavelli in the political thought and conduct of the king, which we have had to depict, was only one aspect of the historical process. There was also another aspect in which Anti-Machiavelli triumphed over Machiavelli. For Prussia did not become a pure power-State; on the contrary, owing to Frederick it was also put on the road to being a civilized and constitutional State. Henceforth it harboured within itself both Machiavelli and Anti-Machiavelli.

The warmth of feeling which in his later years he was anxious to

[1] Compare Ranke's fine remark (*Werke*, 29, 154): 'His opinions themselves, deeply rooted as they were in him, were nevertheless not the pure outcome of his own reflection; they were at the same time necessitated by the situation he was in of being threatened from all sides, by the need for action which was *immediately necessary*.'—Dock, *Der Souveranitätsbegriff von Bodin bis zu Friedrich d. Gr.* (1897), spoke of him in tones that were much too modern, when he wrote (p. 142): 'Frederick the Great was the first to grasp the idea of the personification of the State, and consequently also that of State sovereignty.' Cf. on the other hand Heller, *Hegel und der nationale Machtstaatsgedanke in Deutschland* (1921), p. 165, who correctly points out that a monarch had seldom advocated so forcefully, both in word and deed, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the ruler. The curious thing about Frederick however is that he does indeed already have a vital perception of the personality of the State, but that, in spite of looking on himself merely as an instrument of the State, he nevertheless holds fast to the sovereignty of the ruler.

introduce into the concept of the 'Fatherland' [1] shows how he himself was also emotionally inclined towards that which his will had created. The marble statue, which his *raison d'état* had fashioned, began to come alive.

But serious problems resulted for the Prussian State, and later for the German nation, on account of this dualism between Machiavelli and Anti-Machiavelli, which Frederick had implanted there. And if previously we declared that an appeal to the interest of the 'State' constituted the only possible basis for the right to break treaties in case of need, then we must now add that even this did not lead on to a complete harmony that was ultimately satisfying to the human mind; on the contrary, it led on to conflicts and deep abysses into which we have often enough had a glimpse already. Not until the conclusion of our historical investigation will it be possible for us to give a final estimate of their significance.

* * *

More than once in Frederick's words and thoughts one also catches an echo of the familiar traditions and intellectual processes of the older doctrine of interest. The basic idea, with which Rohan's work began, came alive once more in Frederick's repeated acknowledgments of the pressing imperative of State interest. Already in the *Antimachiavell* it says: 'Great rulers have always forgotten themselves . . . in order to encompass better their true interests.' 'One must blindly follow the interest of the State,' says the Testament of 1768.[2] In both places he linked this proposition with the doctrine (which had also appeared long before) that no special preference or antipathy towards particular nations should be allowed to influence policy, but that on the contrary the decisive voice should be that of interest solely. The traditional policy of the balance of power was also advocated by him from a theoretical point of view with absolute distinctness in the *Considérations* of 1738 and in the *Antimachiavell*, as also later in the Testament of 1752.[3] It was incumbent on Prussia (if ever it was on any State) to maintain this policy, to range herself with all the strength she could muster on the side of one of the great powers, and derive some advantage from the wavering and undecided states of their rivalries. The opposition that existed between the great powers made it possible for smaller powers of

[1] *Lettres sur l'amour de la patrie* (1779), *Œuvres*, 9, 213 ff.

[2] *Œuvres*, 8, 294; *Polit. Testamente*, p. 210.

[3] *Œuvres*, 8, 24, 294; *Polit. Testamente*, p. 47 f. He gave a sketch of the European balance of power in the *Lettre d'un Suisse à un Génois* of 1759/60 (*Œuvres*, 15, 144 f.): *C'est à cette sage politique que nous devons la durée de divers gouvernements européens; cette digue s'est constamment opposée aux débordements de l'ambition.* Cf. also *Œuvres*, 10, 208 (*Apologie des rois*, 1749), and Fechner, *Friedrichs d. Gr. Theorie der auswärtigen Politik*, p. 14 f.

the type of Prussia to spring up. But Frederick also tried very soberly to understand the various dependencies and limitations, by means of which the system of the European balance of power was capable of pinning down just those very smaller powers. 'If a warlike ruler', he noted in 1752, 'raises his standard just at a time when France and England wish to avoid war and are agreed about it, then it must be assumed that they will offer arbitration to the warring parties, and even force it on them. This policy, which was formerly introduced into Europe, hinders great conquests from being achieved and makes wars fruitless, unless they are conducted with great preponderance of strength and lasting good fortune.' It was in this way that he characterized (and in a very pregnant manner) the entire power-policy of the *ancien régime*, ceaselessly agitated but at the same time always remaining within certain fixed limits; it was not indeed merely the mechanism of the system of the balance of power that kept it within these limits, but also the very restricted military possibilities of the period. It was not until the advent of the national State of the French Revolution, and the strong national army which it created, that these limitations were overridden.

Frederick could not have foreseen this. But, guided by the principle of *raison d'état*, he had nevertheless (as we have seen) succeeded in getting somewhere near the historical and political mode of thought of the nineteenth century. It was in fact on the basis of this guiding-principle that, from the seventeenth century onwards, the doctrine of the individual interests of the various States had been developed—a doctrine which likewise formed a stepping-stone towards modern historicism. It had not yet acquired that specific sense for what was individual, for what proceeded from the innermost vital roots, a sense which only historicism succeeded in developing; but it was firmly grounded on a purely empirical understanding of the manifold quality of vital human relationships. And the Enlightenment was therefore subsequently capable of laying down a universal framework, by venerating the creative power of Nature in this manifoldness of things. 'Everything in the universe is varied,' Frederick wrote in the *Antimachiavell*,[1] 'the fruitfulness of Nature delights in manifesting itself in various creations which, even when they are of the same kind, are yet completely different from one another.' One saw this not only in the case of plants, animals, landscapes, etc., but this operation of Nature even extended as far as the different characters of realms and monarchies. For this reason, however, it was also impossible for there to be any general rules in politics.

It was for this reason that he too cultivated the doctrine of the interests (or, to use his own expression, the doctrine of the 'temperaments')

[1] *Œuvres*, 8, 215.

of separate States—and he cultivated it first and foremost for the practical purposes of policy. But with his brilliant mind he also went so far as to approach the task of making use of it for the writing of history. Altogether on four separate occasions [1] he allowed his gaze to rove in this way over the scene of the European States, and painted a set of pictures of the States and their various interests: in the *Considérations* of 1738, in the *Histoire de mon temps*, and in the Political Testaments of 1752 and 1768.

Anyone acquainted with the earlier protagonists of the doctrine of interest is bound to notice in these four descriptions a definite fixed tradition and technique. In the Testament of 1768 he specified a knowledge of the 'interests of rulers' as a principal subject for the instruction of a young ruler;[2] one notices at once the technical expression which has become the regular one used in literature on the subject. Rousset's useful handbook, which had run into three editions, could scarcely have remained unknown to the young crown prince.[3] One passage in the Political Testament of 1752 contains an absolute echo of Rohan, owing to Frederick's use of the expression that '*Christian* Europe' constituted a republic of sovereigns.[4] The fact that, as regards content, his work was quite independent of any predecessors is beside the point; for it is a permanent characteristic of the doctrine of interest that on each occasion it has to be written anew. Frederick perhaps did no more than bring it to the highest degree of completion of which it was capable under the *ancien régime*. For in this instance a superior mind was spurred on by his own personal interest, and by the pressure of an unusually difficult political task, to give as acute and exact an opinion as possible, to establish the 'true interests' of his rivals in the coolest and most empirical way he could, and represent them in the most evident and drastic manner possible.

[1] Strictly speaking, five occasions; for in the 1775 version of the *Hist. de mon temps*, the introductory chapter was essentially re-fashioned (though not with any advantage to the problem that occupies us here). We are therefore using here the introductory chapter from the 1746 version, as it is briefly called, although Frederick was still working on this very chapter in February 1747; cf. Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs d. Gr. mit Grumkow und Maupertuis*, p. 216, and Posner in *Miszellaneen z. Gesch. Friedrichs d. Gr.*, pp. 228 ff.

[2] P. 235. Cf. also the introduction to the section on p. 196, which is rather reminiscent of the literature of the doctrine of interest.

[3] From 1732, Rousset was a member of the *Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* in Berlin, and periodically forwarded political correspondence to Berlin. Droysen, *Gesch. der preuss. Politik*, IV, 4, p. 13 f.

[4] P. 47: *Il faut regarder l'Europe chrétienne comme une république de souverains divisée en deux puissants partis. La France et l'Angleterre, depuis un demi siècle, ont donné le branle aux autres.* Cf. with this Rohan's introductory words (*supra*, p. 169): 'There are two powers in Christendom, which are like two poles, producing warlike and peaceful influences that affect the other States.' Also Frederick's letter to Voltaire of 13th October 1742 (*Briefwechsel*, 2, 152) reminds one of this.

In order to discover the 'true interests' of the various States, it was necessary to draw subtle distinctions, and then go on to draw yet more subtle distinctions—and this not merely in accordance with one single criterion, which would straightway have led one into doctrinairism, but rather in accordance with all the different criteria which were demanded by the fluid nature of things, and which were indeed consequently also obliged to assume a certain fluid and logically incomplete character. Frederick did not have at his disposal the dialectical and intuitive resources of modern historicism. He was, as we have noticed, still under the spell of that mechanical doctrine which held that human affairs did fundamentally repeat themselves, for the reason that human nature remained the same. It was therefore impossible even for the interests of separate States to appear to him in the light of something singular and individually alive; rather they seemed only to be a series of kaleidoscopic permutations of the same atoms. Even the distinctions he drew between them partook more of the general than of the individual. But, owing to the multiplicity of his points of view, he surpassed all the earlier attempts made by the doctrine of interest to distinguish between the essential and the inessential interests of the States, between those that were permanent and those that were momentary.

One of the most important distinctions which he was fond of drawing, and which we have already come across in a different context, was that between the interest-policy of great rulers and that of smaller rulers. In fact the principal thesis of the *Antimachiavell* had already been based on this distinction. According to this work, the statecraft of Machiavelli was indeed merely that of the small Italian *principini*. It was a tacit implication of his observations that the true and great type of statecraft was most completely capable of flourishing in the great and powerful States. This already reminds one of modern representatives of the idea of power, such as Treitschke—men for whom the highest ethos of the State could only be truly alive in a really powerful State. Without doubt, it is very easy indeed for the statecraft and interest-policy of small weak States, which are only in the process of striving towards power, to assume a petty and even a repulsive character. Richelieu had already remarked that, as regards keeping treaties and agreements, the small powers were less trustworthy than the great powers, who had to look after their reputation.[1] When, in the *Avant-propos* of 1743, Frederick came to treat the problem of power-policy in a naturalistic manner and without any moralizing intent, he noted correctly that the policy of weak States (which was by nature just as unscrupulous as that of great States) was distinguished from the latter by a great degree of timidity; and (just as Treitschke did later) he selected the Electoral State of Saxony as the classic example of the inferiority of the policy of small

[1] *Testament politique*, Pt. 2, ch. 6.

States. According to his verdict in the *Histoire* of 1746, Saxony demonstrated 'ostentation without true power, a craving for domination and yet a basic lack of independence (*véritable dépendence*), and in her case the kind of policy of the small Italian rulers, as described by Machiavelli, took the place of the equable, virile and vigorous system followed by the statesman in the powerful monarchies'.[1] Similarly, in the Testament of 1752 he remarked: [2] 'The policy of petty rulers is a tissue of villainy: the policy of great rulers has in it more of wisdom, dissimulation and the love of glory.' Great power does indeed possess a certain educative influence. It can give rise to feelings of responsibility for a great collective whole, and just as large-scale commerce will develop a natural tendency towards more rational methods, so also does the conduct of large-scale political affairs. Moreover a person who disposes of the greater kinds of power-resources is in a better position to behave in a magnanimous way and abjure petty tricks and dishonesties. Frederick had experienced all this in practice, and his observations are correctly drawn. But did this constitute an exhaustive characterization of the difference between the power-policy of great and small States? Was it altogether possible here to draw a rigidly exclusive dividing-line, and were there not facts in existence that were capable of placing the matter in an essentially different light? Frederick, as we have noticed, was not yet in a position to understand completely this fluid and relative character of historical phenomena. But he was certainly also capable, once he had taken up a different point of view, of viewing this difference between the policies of great and small States under an entirely different aspect. Thus, in his *Brandenburgische Denkwürdigkeiten*,[3] he says: 'Both of these rulers, Louis XIV and the Great Elector, concluded treaties and then broke them; but the first did it for reasons of ambition, the second for reasons of necessity. Powerful rulers escape the servitude of their word of honour, by exercising a free and independent will. Rulers who possess scanty power-resources break their obligations because they are often forced to yield to the opportunities of the moment.' So it happens that the less power one has, the stronger can be the pressure exerted by *raison d'état*, constraining one to make use of unattractive measures. This no longer had the effect of morally condemning the more repulsive policy of the small States, but on the contrary rather that of explaining and justifying it in a causal manner. But the possession of greater and less trammelled power does not necessarily lead only to a more noble use being made of it; on the contrary it can also lead to a misuse of it. All this shows once again the unstable and diversified character of the problem of political power.

[1] P. 185. [2] P. 75.

[3] *Œuvres*, 1, 95; similarly in the marginal notes to Montesquieu, in Posner, *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 47, 247, n. 9.

And everything general that can be said on the subject tends to be modified in individual instances by the unique disposition of things—chiefly perhaps by the most unique of all factors, that of personality.

One characteristic of Frederick's statecraft ought also to be mentioned in this context, a characteristic which was at the same time both universal and unique. The reputation that Frederick procured for the Prussian State was quite unique, being based on his own personality. Koser quotes as one of the proudest remarks of his life: 'Reputation is a thing of incomparable value, and is worth more than power.' But at the same time it could be counted as one of those typical expedients and compensations used by those weaker States that were not quite certain of their own power. We saw earlier on how eagerly the topic of reputation was discussed during the period of the incomplete power-relationships of the seventeenth century. And since Frederick felt it very deeply that his own State was lacking in the physical basis requisite for a great power, he impressed it on his successor that it was impossible for a ruler to go to too much trouble in order to acquire and maintain a good reputation.[1]

Let us examine closely certain other instructive distinctions which Frederick drew in the policy of interest. In the two greatest competing European powers, namely in France and England, Frederick was faced with two essentially different types of methods and aims in the matter of power politics. France had (as Frederick judged in a purely causal manner and entirely without tinge of moral feeling) [2] an aim which was set her by Nature herself, an aim which was apparent from a glance at the map; this was the aim of placing her power on as firm a foundation as possible by winning possession of the Rhine frontier down as far as the mouth, and slowly working forward towards it like a sapper. France had an unspoken but quite firm conviction that she would one day achieve this aim and, when judging her policy, it was always important not to lose sight of this conviction. England on the other hand was not, in his opinion, striving after conquests, but rather sought wealth by achieving a dominating position in trade. For neither power, however, were these aims the final or real ones. Nor was it indeed simply a national hatred that divided them [3] (and in noting this, Frederick showed himself quite free from banal convention), but rather a competitive rivalry to occupy the position of general arbiter in Europe, and a mutual commercial jealousy. 'The French wish to conquer their enemies, in order to impose their arrogant laws on them; the English

[1] *Polit. Testament von 1768*, p. 220; cf. Koser, *Gesch. Friedrichs d. Gr.*, 5th ed., 3, 537.

[2] *Histoire* of 1746, p. 206 f.; cf. also the *Considérations* of 1738, *Œuvres*, 8, 15 f.

[3] In the 1775 version of the *Histoire* (*Œuvres*, 2, 46) he certainly took up the hatred motive once again.

wish to buy slaves and subdue Europe by means of the temptation of corruption and wealth.' In accordance with these criteria, he believed it was quite possible to divide up the rest of Europe too. Those rulers who were driven by an urge towards aggrandizement, he saw as inclining towards France; those others who preferred wealth to glory, as inclining towards England.[1]

Occasionally, however, he made yet another distinction. He distinguished between the object of French interest and the object of French vanity. The interest of France demanded a frontier on the Rhine, her vanity demanded the post of European arbiter. And this division stirred him more profoundly. For, in the Testament of 1752, he also made a sharp opposition between wars which were waged for reasons of vanity, and those which were waged for reasons of interest, and spoke with contempt of those fools who were prompted by vanity.[2] This is the important and fruitful distinction between a policy of prestige and a policy of interest—a distinction which Bismarck later impressed on his people, and which Ranke frequently enough draws attention to. But from Frederick's opinions in 1746, mutually incompatible and merging imperceptibly from one view to another, one already gets an idea how, in his own mind, things were becoming fluid, and the dividing-lines he had just drawn were again beginning to alter. Out of the mere safeguarding of power and existence, out of 'interest' in the narrower sense, there immediately grows (as soon as the latter is well on the way to being satisfied) the tare of pure joy in power for its own sake, of that urge towards domination which is so often mingled with vanity, something which can only be kept within bounds by the moderating wisdom of the agent and by the objective limitations of environment. But the seed of this tare is often deeply imbedded already in that earlier motive of safeguarding one's existence, albeit this earlier motive is acknowledged by reason. This was true of France's passionate craving for a frontier on the Rhine—a craving which, in Frederick's opinion, could be described as 'natural'. It was also true of himself when, in 1740, he set out for his '*Rendez-vous* with glory'.

In the last resort, it was possible for the agent to refrain from making too subtle an investigation about whether the act he was about to commit partook of a healthy policy of interest or whether perhaps it did not also contain unhealthy elements of a policy of prestige; he could leave all this to the historical judgment of posterity. As far as the job on hand was concerned, it was more important for him to possess definite criteria with which to make another distinction. It was both the aim and the ambition of the doctrine of interest to distinguish the 'fixed and lasting interests' of States (this was a favourite expression of Frederick's) from the momentary and transient interests, and thus

[1] *Histoire*, p. 210. [2] P. 50.

provide static formulae with which one could build. From the very outset Frederick had meditated consciously and profoundly on the subject of how far one might rely on these formulae. We may recall that, in the *Considérations*, he attempted to study the collective interplay of the 'permanent interests of the various courts' just as if they were a piece of clockwork, and on this basis he tried to calculate what was likely to happen. Then, in the *Histoire de mon temps*,[1] he went into the subject methodically. 'I know very well', he more or less says, 'that the interplay of interests of the powers, as I have represented it here, does have exceptions. But that is a characteristic property of systems. Much agrees with them, much can be "adjusted" to agree with them. Bad policy, prejudices, false calculations, corruption in the ministers—any of these may temporarily diverge from the permanent and lasting interest of the State, but these aberrations can never be of long duration. It is certainly possible to mix different fluids up together in a glass for a moment or two by shaking them, but oil and water will very soon separate off from one another again.' [2]

He possessed the gifted statesman's inclination towards the use of epigrammatic and pictorial expressions, in which the image, once coined, readily acquires an extremely persuasive and suggestive power. There is another masterly image (which had remained unknown until a short while previously), one that was indeed painful to German feelings, and by which he sought to depict a fixed and permanent interest-relationship of his time, namely the intricate connection between France and Prussia. In the Testament of 1752, it says: 'Silesia and Lorraine are two sisters, of whom Prussia has married the elder and France the younger. This connection forces them both to follow the same policy. Prussia would not be able to look on calmly, while Alsace or Lorraine was being taken away from France, and Prussia is in a position to help France effectively, by being able at once to carry the war right to the heart of the Austrian hereditary possessions. On similar grounds France could not suffer Austria to recover Silesia, since this would have far too weakening an effect on an ally of France, an ally who is useful to her in the north and within the Empire and would certainly be able, by creating diversions, to save Alsace or Lorraine for her in any unexpected situation of great danger.'

So it came about that Frederick counted the 'eternal' enmity between the Houses of Austria and Bourbon amongst the number of his political axioms. The enmity was eternal, he said,[3] because the most attractive

[1] P. 48.

[2] Other passages in which Frederick expresses the doctrine of the triumph of 'true interests' over the 'transient illusions': the proclamation to Podewils in the Hague, of 28th February 1745, *Polit. Korresp.*, 4, 67 ff., and the letter to d'Alembert, 7th Oct. 1779, *Œuvres*, 25, 130.

[3] *Histoire* of 1746, p. 208. Cf. *Polit. Testament*, 1752, p. 44.

conquests of the Bourbons consisted of countries that had been taken away from the Austrian monarchy. Here indeed he might at least have been prompted by one of his own axioms and basic interests (one which he himself had consistently applied), to make a cautious qualification. He himself only prized those gains in territory that bordered directly on the State. He sought to dispose of outlying territory, and barter it for some contiguous district. As in 1741, when it became likely that East Frisia would fall into his hands, he began watching out for an opportunity of exchanging it for Mecklenburg,[1] and there was a strain of similar ideas running through his whole life. 'A village on the frontier,' says his famous slogan from the *Exposé du gouvernement prussien* of 1776,[2] 'is worth more than a principality 60 miles beyond it.' Frederick knew that all politically enlightened men felt the same. Might he not also have been sure that Austria (who had done quite as much as himself to create this problem of rounding off one's territory) would learn in time to forget the theft of those provinces which lay far away from her hereditary possessions? Ought it to be assumed that France and Austria would be kept at variance for ever by the loss of Alsace and Lorraine? In 1756 it had already got to the stage that Austria was prepared to renounce the Southern Netherlands in order to win back Silesia.[3]

There was more weight in a second argument that Frederick adduced for the 'eternal' opposition between France and Austria. In general France could not afford to allow Austria to rise again, and was obliged to try, on every occasion, to foster and conserve the 'Germanic free-

[1] *Polit. Korrespondenz*, 1, 357.

[2] *Œuvres*, 8, 188; *Polit. Testamente*, p. 242. Regarding the date of origin, cf. Hintze, *Forschungen*, 32, 6. Another interpretation of the phrase in the *Polit. Testament* of 1768, p. 215.

[3] Koser (*Zur preuss. u. deutschen Geschichte*, p. 404 f.) quite rightly traces the beginnings of the idea of territorial consolidation in Austrian policy back to 1714, when Austria struggled hard to separate Belgium from the Spanish inheritance. Even at that time contemporaries supposed that there was a plan to exchange the Netherlands for Bavaria. (Cf. Nic. Hieron, *Gundlings Collegium über die Friedenstraktate*, 1714, p. 21.) Even the exchange of Lorraine for Tuscany in 1735 was dominated by the idea of territorial consolidation. During the War of the Austrian Succession, there was at one time in Vienna some consideration of the possibility of pacifying the Electorate of Bavaria by means of the Austrian Netherlands, and thus consolidating oneself with Bavarian territory. Ranke, *Werke*, 27/28, p. 457, and 29, p. 53. 'A foot of land in Bavaria is worth more than whole parishes in other districts' was the opinion at that time in Vienna. The idea on which the principle of territorial consolidation was based, namely that acquisitions situated at a distance were impracticable, was naturally capable of being grasped and expressed even earlier. Cf. Clapmar's *Conclusiones de jure publico* (Elzevier edition, 1644), Thesis 100: *Operam et oleum perdunt, qui remotissimis regionibus occupandis animum intendunt. Pulchra est Venetorum oratio apud Guicciardinum* 1.3, *civitatem Pisanam esse quidem opportunam Venetis, sed quod per alienam ditionem et portus eo appellere queant, difficulter et non sine magnis impensis contra Florentinorum molestias conservari posse.*

doms' of the German Empire, i.e. its political disunion. But would it not be possible in time that France would neglect even this basic interest?

It is singular and tragic that Frederick, who knew very well in theory that even oil and water can be mixed together for a moment or two by shaking, and who had experienced in practice once already, when he was crown prince, a temporary agreement between France and Austria, should have quite forgotten this possibility in the severest crisis of his life, on the eve of the Seven Years War. Putting his faith in the constraining pressure of the interests that bound France to him and separated her from Austria, he took the risk in January 1756 of concluding the Treaty of Westminster with England. It was by no means his intention with this to go over into the opposite camp, on the contrary, he only hoped to secure himself against Russia by means of England, and he considered his alliance with France was firm enough for him to be able to lay this extra strain on it. But here the formula of his political statics broke down. The Court of Versailles, angered in the extreme by what Frederick had secured for himself, lent an ear to the overtures of Austria, let herself be bribed by an offer of Belgian territory and consented—not indeed to the complete destruction of Prussia that was desired by Austria (and in this France was in fact following the basic interest imputed to her by Frederick's calculations)—but certainly to an appreciable weakening of Prussian power. Passion triumphed over interest, the foundations of Frederick's work trembled, his fight for survival began.

By the most acute systematic calculation of the interests of the great powers, Frederick had found the point in 1740, at the beginning of his career, from which he could have soared up into their ranks. Now this powerful mind, who had once hoped to calculate the causal chain far into the future, was forced to experience the limitations of his skill. This was the shipwreck of political rationalism, which, founded long before by Machiavelli, had in the atmosphere of the Enlightenment become too certain of itself. As soon as the doctrine of the interests of States became a dogma it led to the danger of over-estimating the rational element in politics and under-valuing the irrational element. This was indeed its special task and difficulty—to have to alternate to and fro between considering first one and then the other. This very polarity already contained the tragic element—that this doctrine, which had to try for the highest degree of precision, was on that very account subject to imprecision.[1]

[1] A counterpart in world history to Frederick's error (which was so pregnant with consequences), an equal exaggeration of the doctrine of interest and punished with the same tragic results, was the opinion of v. Holstein (who dominated German politics around 1900) that England and Russia, the whale and the bear, could never come together, and would never be capable of concluding an alliance between themselves.

Every mode of observation which is founded on rational principles does, sooner or later, fall into the danger of becoming unreal and artificial. This reminds us too that we ought not to put too great a strain on our own mode of looking at things. Whilst we are investigating here the operations of certain ideas, we ought not to forget that the individual character, the special temperament of the agent also appears there and leaves its imprint on them. If one is to understand the course of Frederick's life, one must keep firmly in mind that quite special blend of imagination and reflection which his character contained, that inclination always to speculate and to calculate simultaneously,[1] the true gambler's trust in the success of boldly risking one's stakes. Intellect, imagination and vital will all unite together to create in him that same heroic optimism which Machiavelli had formerly depicted in the struggle between *virtù* and fate. A power such as this can certainly be shattered by fate, but it cannot go astray by itself. When, in the dark weeks after the Battle of Kolin, Frederick was forced to admit to himself the shipwreck of his statecraft, he did not do so in order to lament that he had steered a wrong course, but rather that he, as a man of action and a hero, with his merely human knowledge, had come to grief on the incalculable obstacles of fate. 'How could I have known, that France would send 15,000 men into the Empire? . . . Politicians cannot foresee the future; that which is commonly called chance, and which is described by philosophers as causation of the second order, eludes their calculations. We have certain principles to guide our judgment, and these principles consist of the interest of the rulers and in whatever is required by the alliances they have made. . . . The policy of kings has never been influenced by the bonds of blood-relationship. How could one foresee that the tears of the Dauphin's wife, the calumnies of the Queen of Poland and the lies of the Viennese Court would draw France into a war that was diametrically opposed to her political interests? Since time out of mind France has been at war with Austria, all their interests are diametrically opposed. It has always been the policy of France to have powerful allies in the north, who could create diversions that would be useful to her. Sweden, who used to be of service to her, has now lost its power and its influence on the continent. So there remained only Prussia. Who could have imagined that an inexplicable change of mind and the intrigues of a few gossiping women could have alienated her from her true interest, and from the only system that really suited her?' [2]

After Frederick had once committed the momentous mistake of 1756, it was not really necessary for him to change his ideas or learn anything

[1] Cf. Paul-Dubois, *Frédéric le Grand d'après sa correspondence politique*, 1903, pp. 43, 59, 66.

[2] *Apologie de ma conduite politique* (July 1757), *Œuvres*, 27, 3, 283 f.

afresh; on the contrary, it was only necessary for him to repeat to himself more forcibly something he had known for a long time, and to impress on his mind once again the element of uncertainty in any prediction of the interplay of interest. One seems to detect a result of the experience he has undergone, when one reads in the Testament of 1768: [1]

'Most great political designs are based on a skill in conjecture, which is often deceptive. One starts out from the most certain point one knows of; one combines this, as well as one can, with completely unknown things, and out of all this one draws conclusions that are as correct as possible. In order to express this more clearly, let me give an example. Russia wishes to win over the King of Denmark; she promises him Holstein-Gottorp, which belongs to the Russian Grand-duke, and hopes by this means to win his friendship for ever. But the King of Denmark is thoughtless. How can one foresee all the things that pass through this young head? The favourites, the mistresses and ministers that get control of his mind, and make proposals to him on behalf of some other power, proposals that seem to him more advantageous than those of Russia—will these not bring him to the point of changing round completely? A similar uncertainty, although appearing every time in a different form, holds sway in all operations of foreign policy, so that in the case of great alliances, the result is often the very opposite of what was planned.'

But why, if the uncertainty is so great (he asked), are large-scale political plans still made? His reply is worthy of note. One does it for the sake of the advantage that one derives from the country one allies oneself to, and in the process the latter country will certainly not forget its own advantage. 'These projects of mutual ambition are the sole bond between nations. Every power would remain isolated, were it not for the advantages it looks for by associating with some other power.'

A set of isolated power-States, alone yet linked together by their mutually grasping ambitions—that was the state of affairs to which the development of the European State-organism had brought things since the close of the Middle Ages. And never was the isolation of the power-State carried so far as in this last century of the *ancien régime*. The clerical and religious ideas, within the atmosphere of which mediaeval Europe had felt itself to be a unity, and in which subsequently Europe, after the religious split, had found space to contain two large camps—these ideas had long since passed away. The ideas treating Europe as a collective whole, ideas with which William of Orange had worked, had been undermined by the special egoisms of the separate States (the special egoisms having been present there from the very outset); these ideas had been scooped out till there remained only the 'politics of *convenance*' of the Rousset period, and this imperceptibly passed over

[1] P. 192.

from European expediency to the special expediency of the individual States. Frederick's various interventions into European politics after 1740 had in fact accelerated this process, and had laid the ideology of a collective European interest completely to their credit.

On the other hand, nothing had yet been put in its place by the new communities of interests that were to be introduced by the nineteenth century. There did not yet exist any such linking together of interests, as was produced by capitalist economy. It was in fact the very essence of the predominant mercantilism, that each State should make itself as little dependent on foreign imports as possible and should try to make itself self-contained. And in addition there was still a complete absence of the great contrasts that were to be produced by the French Revolution; these contrasts may indeed have split Europe afresh, but they also bound together afresh those parts that had a similar point of view. The domestic political issues, the struggles around the question of freedom within the country which later split Europe into a conservative and a liberal camp, did not as yet play any part in the relationships between the States. In fact never, either before or since, did universally European ideas and interests form such a small part, as they did then, in European policy of the first rank. Frederick was right: the isolated States were still only knit together by the effects of their own *raison d'état*.

Perhaps the sole influence that was still exerted by the rational attitude to life which was typical of the Enlightenment was that it created a cooler, calmer and more patient temperature in which the struggles between the interests of the various States could take place. This did not however have the effect of softening in any way the ferocity of the different ambitions or the acuteness of the material oppositions between States. But it meant that one did inwardly concede to one's opponent (as a merchant does to his competitor) the right to a cunning and even unscrupulous egoism; and even if many loud and often passionate complaints were made about unfair competition, yet the whole business was not taken very tragically. The political hatred between the governments did not go very deep; it was not yet being fed with the fuel of national passions. This cooling-off of the political passions had already begun with the end of the wars of religion, when the sober realism of the seventeenth century set in more strongly, but it had now reached its highest level. And at the same time also, *raison d'état*—conceived as the pure and absolute egoism of State interest, freed of all superfluous passions—stood at the height of its historical development: at least in so far as it ruled in the political field without any rival, and unhindered by any other vital forces. And it reached its particular culmination in Frederick, who had also purified and ennobled it in himself by suppressing all the dynastic nd personal motives that disturbed it.

This political isolation of the States from each other stood in very sharp contrast to the important process by which Europe tended to fuse together intellectually through the medium of the movement of the Enlightenment. The divided double-life of philosopher and statesman which Frederick led within himself was also at the same time the double-life of Europe. The inner influences, which were nevertheless also exerted by the spirit of the Enlightenment on the spirit of politics, did in fact contribute towards the perfecting of *raison d'état*; and they culminated in the ideas of enlightened despotism which, starting out from the pattern set by Frederick, began their triumphal progress through Europe. But the realization of these ideas was and remained throughout the individual concern of each isolated State, and it created no new solidarities between the States. Thus the universalism of the Enlightenment fostered the particularism of the State.

In this respect it is instructive to note how Frederick treated the domestic-political constitutional questions within the framework of his observations about the interests of States. In the *Antimachiavell* he still showed a certain platonic interest in what constituted the 'best State', in what was the ideal form for the State; and, led on by Voltaire, he found England to be a 'model of wisdom', because there parliament acted as arbiter between king and people, and though the king certainly had power to do good, he had no power to do evil.[1] In all his later observations the internal constitutional arrangements of countries aroused his interest solely in respect of their influence on the country's power-situation and power-policy. And it was only when their influence on the power-situation was negative and weakening that he treated them in any detail. In the important introductory chapter of the *Histoire de mon temps*, one finds that most of the statements about constitutional history are made in connection with States, such as Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, the German Empire or Poland, which pursued little or no power-policy. The absolutist regime of his great rivals seemed to him to require no special portrayal; it was self-evident.[2] It was with all the more interest that he treated their rulers and statesmen, for—'States are only what the men who rule them make of them'.[3] Moreover, in the pictures he drew of the absolutist monarchs, he certainly dealt with their military and financial resources, and perhaps even with the national characters of their respective peoples. But he showed no interest at all in the internal structure of, for instance, the French and Austrian State-organism. For him these questions were minor details in

[1] *Œuvres*, 8, 255; cf. also 243, and Madsack, *Der Antimachiavell*, p. 93.

[2] He only inserted a few disjointed remarks about this into the conclusion of the chapter (p. 204 f.).

[3] *Polit. Testament* of 1752, p. 69; cf. also p. 73: *Les royaumes dépendent des hommes qui les gouvernent.*

the art of administration, questions that he himself dealt with in his own State with the utmost precision and conscientiousness, but which seemed to him important for foreign policy only on account of the results they produced, not on account of their own existence and development. As far as he was concerned, each one of these absolutist governments might deal with their own subjects as best they could; he was only interested in knowing what kind of men were ruling the State, what their plans were, and what they had behind them in the way of money and troops. And this essentially was the way in which all the great power-States, alien and indifferent, affected his emotional feelings (and not only his emotional feelings). The isolated States, headed by the isolated personalities of their rulers—at that time they were in fact held together by no other internal bond save that of mutual usefulness or harm.

There can therefore be no question of thinking that he followed the course of the internal struggles, the triumphs or defeats of absolutism in foreign countries with any kind of heartfelt sympathy on principle, or any particular agreement with its point of view. The only thing that interested him about it was the resulting influence it exerted on the functioning of power politics. In Sweden (he noted in 1752 [1]) an ambitious king might well have been able to re-establish despotism—the very expression he uses shows a complete lack of any genuine solidarity with the affairs of his sister, Luise Ulrike. His only reason for wishing her success at that time was because an absolutist Sweden could have acted as an effective and useful counterpoise to Russia in the north.[2] Fundamentally, too, it was only with absolutist States that he could rely on a real power-policy that could be taken seriously, and in this he was also quite right with respect to the continental States of his time. In his eyes States (such as the Sweden of that time) in which republican and monarchical elements were mingled, were a form of hybrid; for 'the passions of monarchical States are opposed to the principles of freedom', and a conjunction of both in any State will only produce chaos.[3] On the other hand, pure republics seemed to him to be State-organisms *sui generis*, and he even felt a certain sympathy towards them, not indeed of a political, but of a philosophical kind. According to his own view (which was brought to fruition by Montesquieu, and had already, as we know, a long tradition behind it) they were obliged to live and carry on their affairs in peace if they were to preserve their

[1] *Polit. Testamente*, p. 73.

[2] He later warned his sister against any kind of absolutist experiments: *Je connaissais la nation suédoise et je savais qu'une nation libre ne se laisse pas aisément ravir la liberté*, 9th March 1764. *Œuvres*, 27, 379. Cf. also Koser, *Gesch. Friedrichs d. Gr.*[5], 2, 436; 3, 384, 505.

[3] *Histoire de mon temps*, 1746, p. 178.

freedom—the fate of the Roman Republic had shown him this.[1] He was roused to acknowledge, with quite a considerable warmth of expression, the exemplary peacefulness and happiness of the quiet existence of the Swiss cantons.[2] The humanitarian philosopher in him was indeed still capable of speaking out at any time, whenever he was not hindered from doing so by the disagreeable business of *raison d'état*. The gentle irony that is discernible in his remark about the 'passions of monarchical States' does show that, in the last resort, he was even conscious of a certain feeling of detachment towards his own political profession. 'He always appears', says Ranke,[3] 'to stand at a certain height above all the various activities of nations and States. This corresponds altogether with his sceptical attitude.'

There was only one of the great powers that did not fit into the pattern of States playing the absolutist game (to whom he was linked by his destiny); this was England. What he, as a young philosopher, had said about England's model constitution was certainly not repeated by him when he grew older, and he now looked at England only with the eyes of a politician. On the contrary, he repeatedly passed very critical judgments on the element that was alien to him in the functioning of the English State—the restlessness and apparent instability which arose from the juxtaposition of the tendencies and arrangements emanating from the court on the one hand, and those emanating from parliament on the other.[4] But, when he evaluated the resources of England from a purely political point of view, he was also capable of freeing himself from all monarchical prejudices, and of thinking himself into the standpoint of the peculiar English *raison d'état*. He was of the opinion that the Guelphic kings ought not to try and force an absolutist regime upon the freedom-loving English nation. 'The King (George II) learnt, from the ill-success that attended his dangerous experimental exercise

[1] Later, in the *Examen de l'essai sur les préjugés* of 1770 (*Œuvres*, 9, 143), he referred to the warlike policy not only of the ancient republics, but also the modern republics, such as Venice, Holland, etc., but without noticing that the full development of the absolutist military monarchies was putting an end to the active power politics of the aristocratic republics of Europe.—He was also capable of thinking himself into the particular *raison d'état* of the republics. He allowed them in their domestic affairs, in their administration of justice, methods which the absolutist power-State was already capable of renouncing. If, for example, in Geneva a plot was discovered against the stability of the republic, and the identity of the accomplices had to be established, *dans ce cas je crois que le bien public voudrait qu'on donnât la question au delinquent*. To Voltaire, 11th Oct. 1777 (*Briefwechsel*, 3, 416). He had publicly abolished torture in Prussia on 3rd June 1740, only making an exception in the case of high treason, for which torture was also abolished in 1755. Koser, *Gesch. Friedrichs d. Gr.*[5], 1, 197.

[2] *Hist. de mon temps*, 1746, p. 187.

[3] *Werke*, 24, 125.

[4] *Dissertation sur les raisons d'établir ou d'abroger les lois*, 1750, *Œuvres*, 9, 21; also the remarks in the Political Testaments, pp. 72, 204, 225.

of authority, how extremely careful he would have to be not to misuse it.' [1]

But even though he always retained a very high opinion of the importance of England in European politics, he was still never quite capable of understanding it completely and adequately; this was because England projected out beyond the continental horizon of his own interests into the sphere beyond the seas, a sphere with which he never became completely familiar. 'Maritime affairs eluded him', Lavisse had already remarked, not without some truth, about the young Frederick.[2] This offers an instructive instance of the principle that, even in the province of State interests, a mere knowledge of the facts will not suffice in order to grasp them in a really vital manner; and that all knowledge must in some way be experienced, if it is to become complete knowledge. For, naturally, he knew perfectly well about the trade of the English which at that time was already spanning the world; he knew of the enormous wealth which this trade brought them; and he knew of the thoroughly mercantile character of their policy. Moreover he always looked upon England and France as the two really great powers of the first rank, whose rivalry constituted the most important clockwork spring in European politics. And yet, in 1746, when he was estimating the weight of the respective masses of England and France, as a whole, one against the other, he did not hesitate to say that France was the stronger power.[3] For France (he thought) united in herself almost all the component parts of power in the highest degree of perfection: she surpassed all other countries in respect of the number of her men capable of bearing arms, and, by means of a wise financial administration, on account of her trade and the wealth of her citizens, she had immense auxiliary resources at her disposal. Indeed England, though 'perhaps she was no less rich, and was strong at sea, yet for that very reason she was weak on land', because for her wars on land she was forced to depend on paid auxiliaries of doubtful quality. Thus one sees that Frederick judged of the strength of a power, chiefly and in the first instance, by its ability to wage war on the continent. He overlooked the enormous importance of the great struggle that was going on overseas between England and France to decide the future of North America and the East Indies, and thus he also overlooked the future possibilities of English power. Nor can one even say that the experiences of the Seven Years War (which brought on the first great moment of decision for that overseas conflict in world history) gave him any appreciably deeper

[1] *Histoire de mon temps* of 1746, p. 172; somewhat softened, but essentially the same too in the version of 1775. *Œuvres*, 2, 14, and in the *Polit. Testament* of 1752, p. 72.

[2] *Le Grand Frédéric avant l'avènement*, p. 197.

[3] *Histoire de mon temps*, p. 206.

understanding of England's position as a great power and a world power. His anger at the faithlessness of his English allies did certainly contribute in some degree towards giving his judgment an unfavourable and somewhat contemptuous flavour. But most of all it was determined, once again, by his purely continental standard of judgment. What benefit, he asked in 1768,[1] will England get in the end from her many colonies? For they all have a natural tendency (differences were already arising at that time between the North American colonies and the mother-country) to tear themselves away and become independent republics. Colonies are extraordinarily costly, and tend to depopulate the mother-country on account of the emigration involved. The only advantageous possessions are those that border on the State.

He really looked at both England and France through Prussian eyes. In the almost complete power-structure of France he found the ideal which he longingly desired for his own dismembered Prussia, so meagrely equipped with men and resources; it was an ideal that he might perhaps one day be able to attain, but of which he was still far short. He had not the faintest inducement to envy or long for the colonial greatness of England. And the frightful burden of debt which England had assumed on account of her recent wars filled him (in his character of thrifty Prussian householder) almost with horror; he resigned himself to a catastrophe which, in view of the way in which European capital was very closely tied up with English trade, might well be capable of destroying the trade of the whole of Europe. England seemed to him at this time like a building that could collapse all at once. It was his view that the brilliant period of her greatness was coming to an end—but he was also conscious of the uncertainty of such predictions. There arose in him the significant premonition, that it might not be permissible to assess the political vitality of a nation merely by certain temporary economic aspects or by the shortcomings of those who happened to be ruling at the time. And so he finally conceded that the machine might still possibly be kept going by virtue of England's vigorous national stock, by the 'strength of power' and by one or two great men. This verdict was all the more remarkable, in that he arrived at it in the teeth of his antipathy against these faithless allies.

With similar care he attempted, in 1768, to assess the future of France as a great power. Here too he was certainly inclined, under the influence of his more narrow Prussian interests, to exaggerate somewhat the importance of State debts on the efficiency of a great nation. But it was indeed by reason of its State debts that France was dragged towards its great revolution. Frederick's political imagination was of course quite incapable of foreseeing an upheaval of this kind. When he surveyed

[1] *Polit. Testamente*, p. 226 f.

world history from the most elevated point of view, he could believe that future revolutions were possible, revolutions that might cast Europe back once more into barbarism, just as it had happened with ancient Hellas.[1] But though, as a philosopher, he still entertained these macroscopic ideas, he did not transfer them to the world which he had to observe in his capacity of ruler. In this latter world he did not reckon with any change in the fundamental State institutions; he did not consider any historical development towards new forms, towards forms that would be different from the ones which his period revealed to him as being apparently fixed and final. He was much more concerned with people, with the rise and fall of the stronger or weaker personalities; also, too, with the disastrous influences of an absurd and bigoted education on the mind of the future ruler of France—but in the last resort even here his instinctive concern was with the primitive strength of the French nation, which, in spite of its moral corruption and lack of seriousness, was still capable of being raised up once again, by one or two great men appearing at the head of the State, a new Richelieu in the council, a new Turenne in the army. It is as if, across the gulf of the Revolution (the advent of which was incomprehensible to him), he foresaw the Napoleonic period that followed it and which would have been much more congenial to his nature. Political and military power, supported by a vigorous strength among the people and rendered effective by great men—those were the basic factors of his doctrine of interest. If we look back at the assessments of individual States carried out by the older advocates of the doctrine of interest, we become aware how much more profound the understanding of it has become; we realize how, behind the interplay of interests (which Frederick too observed most carefully), there was now also a more conscious and vigorous feeling for the primary and important basic forces from which these interests had sprung up.

The basic strength of a unified and talented nation, from which the great Western powers derived their advantage, was lacking in the case of Austria. It is a striking fact that Frederick, in the picture of Austria which he drew in 1746, had nothing to say about the character of the people; on the contrary, he exercised his judgment solely on the leading men, and on the financial and military apparatus which they had at their disposal. His mode of thought was too absolutist in character for him to feel that Austria's lack of a unified people as a foundation was of any essential importance. According to his own definite view (which in general was still that of the entire political world), strong rulers and governments were capable of compensating even for this lack; for the political value of a territorial possession was not to be

[1] To the Electoral Princess Marie Antonie of Saxony, 22nd Oct. 1777, *Œuvres*, 24, 306.

judged in the first instance according to its national quality, but on the contrary it had to be judged in accordance with the value it had for rounding off one's territory geographically. But Frederick certainly felt very strongly that the dynastic power-apparatus of Austria was something more than a mere apparatus, and that a live political collective spirit, with indestructible traditions and interests, held sway there. He could not of course be expected to take a sympathetic view of this. But he did believe that it was 'useful to the great men, who knew how to make some use of it', to trace back the Austrian power-policy (and indeed the power-policy of the various different courts) to its origin in an '*expression des mœurs*', and in a definite intellectual and spiritual continuum.[1] The comparison, which he made when he was still only crown prince, between the power-methods of Austria and France was considerably to the disadvantage of the former. Austria, arrogant and overbearing, blundered along with a clumsy and authoritarian recklessness, whereas France was more 'humane and cunning'. At this time he considered it to be the unshakable aim of Austrian policy to place the imperial hereditary monarchy at the head of the Empire. This was a demagogic excess (in which, at that time, even he himself would certainly have gladly believed), but it was still only an echo of times gone by, and of the passionate complaints made by *Hippolytus a Lapide* against the House of Hapsburg. What could Austria do, in the meantime, without great men of the stamp of Prince Eugene? On his accession to the throne and at the beginning of his great undertakings, the fact that Austria no longer had any Prince Eugene did in fact constitute straight away one of the strongest fixed points in his political calculations. The drastic portrayal (pervaded, as it is, by a secret gratification) of the inner decay of Austrian power in his *Histoire* of 1746, shows this very clearly. But he had to change his views when he saw his female opponent, Maria Theresa, developing before his very eyes into a great ruler. Already in 1752, he was using a noticeably different tone in speaking of Austria, which, after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, had energetically begun to reform her army and her finances. But at this time he was still holding fast to his conventionally tinged judgments about the spirit and aims of Austrian power-policy; he traced her continual habit of domination in the Empire back to the period of Ferdinand I, he acknowledged her tenacious fixity of purpose throughout good and bad fortune, but he also blamed her for behaving in a bullying manner towards her allies, for being ungrateful for services rendered, vengeful against whoever had injured her last, and too unyielding in negotiations.[2]

But now the tremendous experiences of the Seven Years War, and

[1] *Considérations* of 1738; *Œuvres*, 8, 13 f.
[2] *Polit. Testamente*, p. 66 f.

the greater tranquillity and maturity of the period, had essentially transformed the picture he had in his mind of Austria's political individuality. When, in 1768, he took up his pen once again, all the traditional and conventional elements in his verdict fell into the background. There was no longer any trace of the tints which the older Protestant opposition and the opposition composed of the estates of the Empire, and indeed he himself hitherto,[1] had employed to depict Hapsburg imperialism. Through the efforts of Maria Theresa, Kaunitz and the young King Joseph, there had since arisen a new Austria, which now pursued a power-policy that was essentially modern in character. The master-stroke of the new Austrian policy was the Alliance of Versailles, of 1st May 1756, which upset all the ideas in the political tradition and in the 'permanent principles' of the European States. More rational methods and more rational aims, directed towards rounding off the power of the House of Hapsburg, and sloughing off the outlying territories which were more burdensome than useful, began to emerge much more clearly. Who could fail to recognize that Austria, not only in her work of domestic reform, but also in the character of her power-policy, was thus following in the footsteps of her great opponent? In 1768, Frederick acknowledged the importance of this collective achievement in supremely respectful words. He accorded Maria Theresa the highest praise he was capable of giving to any ruler; he said, '*Elle fait tout par elle-même*.' In point of wisdom and systematic activity, her council surpassed that of all other kings.[2] He now saw that the interest of Austria was aiming at precisely the same values which he was nursing in his breast for his own Prussia. One cannot yet be quite certain, he went on, what exactly they are aiming at; for the tremendous burden of debt, amounting to 180 million thalers, which they have incurred by reason of the war, has made it necessary for them temporarily to adopt the mask of peacefulness. But perhaps eventually the young Emperor will strive for Bavaria, perhaps for Venice, perhaps even for the re-conquest of Silesia—all of them being objectives aiming at rounding off their territory, and all at the same time having aroused, at one time or another, in greater or lesser degree, the ambition of the Imperial Palace in Vienna. He therefore also felt that, in the future, extreme mistrust of Vienna, and extreme watchfulness, should form a part of Prussian *raison d'état*.[3] After the end of the 'seventies, when the

[1] Cf. with this Koser in the *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie*, 1908, p. 75, and the *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 96, 222 ff., and Küntzel, *Die drei grossen Hohenzollern*, p. 151.

[2] Cf. with this also *Histoire de la guerre de 7 ans. Œuvres*, 4, 7. It is striking that in this description of Maria Theresa, which was destined for posterity, he shows more emotion in his judgment of her (*cette femme superbe dévorée d'ambition*) than he does in the strictly factual phrases of the Testament.

[3] *Polit. Testamente*, pp. 199 f. and 222 f.

imperialist policy of Joseph II began to unfold, it was therefore also possible for his old anxiety to recur once again, that Germany might be transformed into a hereditary Austrian monarchy.[1] But how remarkably similar the two German rivals had become. Austria seemed to him (and in fact was so in reality) rejuvenated into a rational power-State conducted on the lines of enlightened despotism. Frederick had learnt a lesson. For it is a fact that the very struggles for power between the European States have always produced the effect of making them similar to one another in structure, of leading their interests into the same direction, of eliminating forms and aims that are backward and outmoded, and thus continually regenerating them.

During the course of his political life, Frederick had also been made to experience a similar gradual ascent from a more primitive to a more rational power-policy in the case of his second great neighbour in Eastern Europe, namely Russia. In the first place, of course, the rise of Russia as a great power seemed to him a classic example for his belief in the powerful influence exerted on the State-organism by a strong ruling personality. He marvelled at the achievement of Peter the Great in 'creating soldiers and ministers out of a nation of wild men, in fact even trying to make philosophers out of them'.[2] But in Peter's successors, the semi-barbaric trait made its appearance once again in the methods and aims of foreign policy. There was a sinister quality in the unpredictability of this policy which depended so much on personal caprice of the ruler, on court intrigues, and on sudden wholesale changes in the ruling personnel. It is well known how tensely and anxiously Frederick always had to keep a watch out towards the eastern sky, and how dark clouds often gathered there for him and flashes of lightning blazed out so long as his enemy Elizabeth was alive and Bestuzhev (who, for Frederick's policy, was the evil genius) held sway under her. It was brute passion and a forceful impulse towards domination that was in operation here, much more than the sort of systematic policy of interest, founded on constant requirements, which was close to Frederick's heart, and which he was always bound to want even his opponents to have too, so that he would be able to predict their actions. Even his quite general judgments about Russia had about them something uncertain and tentative. In one and the same chapter of the *Histoire* of 1746, he introduces two different conceptions which are really mutually contradictory.[3] For in one place he characterizes Russia as being 'to a certain extent the arbiter of the North', who had a hand in every European question. But this trait of being a law unto herself, which he thereby conceded to Russia, disappeared altogether in the

[1] *Considérations sur l'état politique de l'Europe* (1782). *Polit. Testamente*, p. 250. Cf. Fechner, *Friedrichs d. Gr. Theorie der auswärtigen Politik*, pp. 17 and 23.

[2] *Histoire* of 1746, p. 179. [3] Pp. 181 and 209.

second judgment he made, by which Russia was to a certain extent sent down a class, and placed in the company of Turkey. Both these powers (he now said) belonged half to Europe and half to Asia. 'These are machines in European politics, which are made use of by France and England in case of necessity.'

It was in the summer of 1746 that Elizabeth concluded the alliance with Austria which henceforth was going to place such a heavy pressure on Frederick. His growing mental disquiet was betrayed by his judgments of 1752.[1] There did not really exist (he noted to himself) any organic opposition between the vital interests of Russia and Prussia. Russia could therefore only be considered 'an accidental enemy' for Prussia; and if the evil Bestuzhev (who was suborned by England and Austria) could once be overthrown, then things would recur to their natural state. To exert an influence in the north, and especially on Poland, to stand well with Austria in order to remain strong against any attack by the Turks—this and no more seemed to him the quintessence of the real Russian interest. But for him the future attitude of Russia was, and went on being, unpredictable, on account of the sensual and animal character of the Tsarina, the corruption of the ministers, and the uncertainty of the succession to the throne. He comforted himself with the vision supplied by his political imagination that Russia might eventually be capable of collapsing completely, on account of struggles for the throne and civil war. Then Prussia, and the whole of Northern Europe, would be able to breathe again.

Terrible years followed, in which, by the very agency of Russia, he was forced to the brink of the abyss; but on account of the sudden change of fortune after the death of Elizabeth he was once more permitted to struggle up into the light. After the Peace of Hubertusburg he was even able to reach a closer understanding with Catherine, and (in 1764) to conclude an alliance with her. After the French alliance of the first decade and a half, and the English alliance of the Seven Years War, the Russian alliance now became, right up until the beginning of the 'eighties, the central fixed point of his European position. And not only the subjective change in his relationship towards Russia, but also an actual further development in Russian power-policy, were both reflected in the picture that Frederick felt himself called upon to paint of her in 1768.[2] What his eye now saw was a definite, rational, easily ascertainable system of Russian interests, which (luckily for Europe) was not immediately directed towards making fresh conquests, but aimed rather at creating good trade-relations with the Northern States, and at achieving political domination over the Kings of Sweden, Denmark and Poland. Frederick knew already even at that time, before the beginning of the negotiations that led to the First Partition of Poland,

[1] *Polit. Testamente*, pp. 42 and 74. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 196 and 221 ff.

that his alliance with Russia would necessarily entail the sacrifice of having to hand Poland over to Russian influence. And he also saw quite clearly that Russia, with her colossal capabilities for a huge increase in population, was a growing power and would exercise a growing pressure. The profound opposition between Austria and Prussia made it difficult to establish any real barrier against Russian ambition. 'Russia is profiting by our mistakes', and Europe in its blindness is allowing (thus he expressed himself, with an outburst of emotion against the pressure of facts by which even he himself was governed) a nation to rise up, which will one day make itself feared in Europe. It is characteristic of Frederick's completely sober and factual policy of interest, free from any antipathies and capable of looking ahead far into the future, that he, who was now the ally of Catherine, should envisage the possibility of a future Austro-Prussian alliance, which should keep Russia in check.[1] Once more he longed for a collapse of Russian power from within, a dismemberment of this vast empire.

For the most part, the older advocates of the doctrine of interest had not so much tended to formulate clearly the whole ensemble which was made up of the changing relations between the various individual great powers, as rather to divine it vaguely or take it for granted. Frederick's intelligence, which tended in general to look for a system and to study the rational connections between things, went one stage further here too. Already, in his political observations of 1738, it was the *corps politique de l'Europe* that provided the fixed conceptual framework. He compared it with the human body, which also has its maladies and lives by certain rules. The health of the *corps politique* was founded on an equilibrium between the great powers; and, with a completely methodical diagnosis, he showed that any severe sickness of the body politic was due to certain disruptions of this equilibrium, which he thought he could discern. But an element of something mechanical and machine-like inevitably still clung to this conception of the collective European *corpus*, and he never afterwards succeeded in escaping from it. Then, together with this he also linked the further task (which had already been attempted by the older advocates of the doctrine of interest, such as Valckenier), namely the task of discerning natural groupings of those European powers that were essentially related. Since, in doing so, he was guided only by a practical need, he applied no other criterion (when, in the *Histoire* of 1746,[2] he came to classify the European States) save that of real power, the standard of a greater or smaller degree of political independence. In the first class he placed England and France.

[1] Cf. also Koser, *Gesch. Friedrichs d. Gr.*, 3, 310, concerning the (as Frederick expressed it) 'patriotic German system', which in twenty years' time perhaps Austria and Prussia would be able to bring to bear against Russia.

[2] P. 208

In the second class he included (somewhat strangely, from a modern historical point of view) Spain, Holland, Austria and Prussia. He was, indeed, judging them merely from the technical point of view of power. The characteristic, which they all had in common, seemed to him to be the fact that each of the four certainly possessed a definite field in which to exercise its own power; but that in the last resort they were all in some way dependent on one of the two great leading European powers. Sardinia, Denmark, Portugal, Poland and Sweden were assigned by him to the third class. What they had in common was that their power-resources could only be set in motion by the help of foreign subsidies, and that their power-policy therefore remained completely subordinate. This picture was fundamentally altered and clarified by the power-activities of the following decades. Notice had to be taken of what Austria and Russia had achieved. When, in 1768,[1] he undertook a fresh classification, these two now appeared in the first class, immediately after France and England. The remaining States, however, were now assessed somewhat more cursorily and not solely according to their power; they were now also grouped according as they formed a part of the alliance system of the really great powers. Thus a picture emerged in which England was shown standing in isolation, France appeared as being 'united' with Spain by means of the Bourbon family pact, while at the same time she was also 'allied' (as he expressed it with subtle nuance) with Austria; while in the north he noted the existence of a Russian alliance-block, which embraced Prussia, Sweden, Denmark and Poland. He likened all the other States to the subsidiary divinities of the heathen. This picture was sketched in so purely and soberly practical a manner that even now—after the tremendous trial of strength he had undergone during the Seven Years War—he still refrained from transposing his own State even to the bottom place in the first class. He was prevented from doing so by a deep sense of the incompleteness and uncertainty of the position of power he had attained. 'He knew the dangers', says Hintze with some justice, 'that lie in the apparent greatness of a State.' [2] He was not certain enough that his successors would possess equal powers of achievement.

Such were the descriptions of the great powers, as depicted by his doctrine of interest, which was influenced by his wish to instruct his successor to the throne.[3] They were steeped (as they could not fail to

[1] *Polit. Testamente*, p. 290. [2] *Forschungen*, 32, 21.

[3] To supplement this, recourse may be had to Ferd. Wagner, *Die europäischen Mächte in der Beurteilung Friedrichs d. Gr.*, 1746–57, in *Mitteil. d. Instituts f. österreich. Geschichtsforschung*, 20 (based on the political correspondence).—Brief reference may also be made to a direct pupil of Frederick's, Baron Bielfeld, and to his handbook of statecraft, the *Institutions politiques* (3 vols., 1760–72). In the *Zeitschr. f. öff. Recht*, VI, 4, 473 ff., I have dealt with his doctrine of interest, which is toned down in accordance with the eudaemonistic spirit.

be) in his personal interest, and limited by the horizon of his own time; though this horizon certainly allowed him to have a presentiment of great, indeed even of vast external changes in the power-relations of the future, yet it did not permit him to suspect the possibility of any fundamental re-shaping of the bases on which they rested. His mind was like a bright light shining in a dark space—a light which illuminated clearly and sharply the things in the immediate vicinity, but did not reach to any distance beyond. At least one can say that he was only capable of comprehending those future events which were homogeneous with his own time and bore some relation to the interests by which his period was activated. Thus (as we have noticed), though he had indeed no inkling of the French Revolution, he certainly did foresee to a certain extent the appearance of Napoleon. He did not have any conception yet of the struggle for national and political unity that would be made on the part of politically-divided nations. But he certainly was strongly aware of the untenability of the old imperial constitution and the situation resulting from it whereby Germany was divided up into many small States. If Austria (he noted in 1768), with the object of rounding off her territory, were to give Flanders to France and acquire Bavaria in return, would not this *esprit de partage* also communicate itself to other powerful rulers? Then they would all want to round off their territory, the strong ones doing so at the expense of the weaker ones. Woe, then, to the abbotships and free imperial cities! [1] This was a prediction of what was to happen in 1803, and at the same time it was a reminiscence of his own project of secularization which he had previously put forward in 1742–3.

Constitutional monarchy and modern democracy were both State-forms of the future for which his own political mode of thought was entirely unsuited. On the other hand, his great historical importance lies in the fact that he recognized certain basic conditions of monarchy —conditions that would preserve its existence, not only in his own period, but also in the period that was to come. The epoch of more rational power-policy and State administration, in which he lived, also demanded a more rational type of monarch; it demanded the kind of breach we have described with the dynastic conception of kingship; it demanded that the mists of court life and of theocracy, which surrounded it, should be dispelled, and that one should live solely by the pure light of *raison d'état*. He put his finger (and here again his premonition was a real one) right on the most fatal wound of the monarchic organism of Europe when he singled out the French monarchy of his

[1] *Polit. Testamente*, p. 228. He also foresaw that one day France would confiscate the Church lands for the State in order to pay its debts. To Voltaire, 24th March 1767; *Briefwechsel*, published by Koser and H. Droysen, 3, 152; cf. also pp. 157 and 403.

period for sharp criticism on the score of the dull and unimaginative spirit in which the heir to the throne was educated. What, he asked, was one to expect and predict of rulers educated in such a stupid manner? [1]

But, whilst this is bound to remind the present-day reader of the fate of Louis XVI, it also draws attention once again to a constant problem inherent in *raison d'état*: namely, the problem presented by those limitations of political rationalism which we have already noticed before in the case of Frederick. There exists a remarkable note in one of Goethe's posthumous papers: *Outlines for a Continuation of* '*Dichtung und Wahrheit*', dictated by him in 1810.[2] In this he speaks of the rulers of his time:

'Actions of great men, leading to sans-culottism. Frederick separates himself from his court. His bedroom contains a state bed. He sleeps in a camp-bed alongside it. Contempt for lampooning, which he is allowing to break out again. Joseph dispenses with outward forms. When travelling, instead of sleeping in the state beds, he sleeps beside them on a mattress placed on the ground. Orders horses for the Emperor, like a messenger on a pack-horse. Maxim: the regent is only the principal servant of the State. The Queen of France dispenses with etiquette. This point of view spreading continually till the King of France even considers himself an abuse.'

This was the difficult question: when the monarchy rationalized itself completely, and trained itself to be the instrument of pure *raison d'état*, but at the same time lowered itself in a purely human way to the level of the other servants of the State, did it not lose in the process an essential and indispensable part of its own inmost and mysterious *raison d'être*? Was Goethe not right in thinking that monarchy, once it was humanized and at the same time materialized, would no longer possess the inner power to resist the egalitarian and revolutionary spirit of the times? Rationalism and romanticism will certainly find entirely different answers to this question. But historical thought must necessarily find some way of uniting together the negative answer of the one and the positive answer of the other, and in doing so it must acknowledge the presence here of one of those profound dualities that exist in historical life, dualities moreover which are not entirely resolved by the mere act of recognizing them. A direct study of the course of history will certainly show that Goethe's judgment was far more valid in the case of France than in the case of Germany, where Frederick's monarchical rationalism, very far from undermining the real authority of the monarchy, actually succeeded in consolidating it. This fact was connected with certain other curious conditions in Germany, just as also the ex-

[1] *Polit. Testament* of 1768, p. 223.

[2] *Goethejahrbuch*, 1908, p. 11 f.; *Weimarer Goetheausgabe*, vol. 53, 384.

treme weakening of the monarchy in France cannot be ascribed solely, and not even chiefly, to the causal chain demonstrated by Goethe. We have in fact already seen, from the criticisms Frederick made about it, that an entirely different and contrary cause contributed to its downfall. It was on account of the unfortunate and unorganic combination of old and new elements in his regime, that the monarchy of Louis XVI came to grief. And that which may act as a poison within one historical combination, may well act as a remedy in a different historical combination. This is especially true of all the ideas inherent in *raison d'état*, ideas which gradually unfolded and underwent a historical development. There is no such thing as an idea or a tendency in history that has an absolutely pure and undiluted effect; but for this reason also no idea can suffice as an absolute criterion by which to judge its own value or lack of value, its own beneficial or injurious properties. Every historical phenomenon is a symbiosis, a unique symbiosis of all the vital forces conjoined in it. But neither should this approach (which can lead to pure relativism, and to the interpretation of history as a biological and vegetative process) be carried too far. For the moral strength of personality, and the measure of inner spontaneity and of constituting a law unto itself which it occasionally possesses, does also contain the force necessary to unite the various elements which occasionally fuse together into a symbiosis. It was this which took effect in Frederick the Great and which gave to his monarchy (freed as it was from all mystique) a creative life of its own, so that this living element was not destroyed even by the collapse of the Frederickian State.

When Frederick's monarchy collapsed in 1806, this did not happen because it had rationalized itself and him out of existence. It was due much more to the unique conjunction of the elements out of which it was built up. The Frederickian *raison d'état* produced a unique, inimitable and unrepeatable work of art in taking the difficult material of a community divided up on aristocratic and corporate lines, and also an economy which was backward and poorly equipped by nature, and building these up into a great power-State that was capable of important achievements. But it could only remain capable of achievement, so long as the European environment remained unchanged and so long as there was no alteration in the internal conditions for existence and in the power-resources of the other great powers. As soon as the French Revolution brought about such a change, the Frederickian State became antiquated and fell behind in the competition. Only personalities as unique as his own, and equally imbued with the spirit of the purest *raison d'état*, would have been capable of continuing to develop the *raison d'état* of the Frederickian corporate State (founded on the three estates) and changing it into the *raison d'état* of the reformed type of national State so that its capabilities for achievement were maintained

at the highest level. The really inevitable tragic element in his *raison d'état* was that it depended on this unique concentration of everything in the one leading personality; it depended on the principle of *gouverner par lui-même*. Whilst it was thereby sharpened to the finest degree of efficacy, it lost all guarantee of permanence. Frederick himself was poignantly conscious of this. 'If the destinies of any State are to be solid and sure, then its fortunes ought not to be dependent on the good or bad qualities of any one man,' he wrote in the Testament of 1752.[1] But there was no personality and no *raison d'état* that was capable of compelling this destiny.

Nevertheless Goethe's words still contain a profound truth which is applicable to Frederick's work. Goethe felt that a certain heterogeneity existed between the aims of enlightened despotism and the character of the old monarchy. In the case of Frederick this heterogeneity reached its height in the cleavage (which we have examined closely) between the ideal of the Enlightenment on the one hand and historical reality on the other, between humanitarian ideas and ideas connected with the power-State. To achieve a harmonious development, Frederick would have needed a different epoch and a State different from the Prussia of that time. If he had been born a citizen of his period, he might have been capable, like Rousseau, of becoming a revolutionary. Once, in the despair and resentment of his seven-year-long fight for existence, he cried out: 'The only point of view from which a citizen may judge the actions of the politicians, is according to their importance for the welfare of humanity, which consists in public safety, freedom and peace. If I start from this premiss, then the words Power, Greatness and Authority cease to influence me.'[2] But, born into his period and into contemporary Prussia as a ruler, he could not become other than a servant of *raison d'état*, in order to attempt by its means to approach his ideal of humanity more closely. So it necessarily happened that the same drama was repeated which we already witnessed in the case of Campanella, only this time with incomparably greater historical effect. *Raison d'état*, with its appeal to the elemental impulses of power and grandeur in Man, triumphed in him over the contempt (which none the less still continued to thrive in him) for power and grandeur; and, 'having regard to the corruption of the century'[3] Frederick decided to follow in the reprehensible steps of Machiavelli. It was in the internal affairs of the State that his humanitarian ideal found scope for its application—though even here, indeed, it was severely limited both by the period and

[1] P. 66; cf. also the *Mémoires de Brandebourg*. *Œuvres*, 1, 238 f.

[2] *Lettre d'un Suisse à un Génois*, written in 1759–60, *Œuvres*, 15, 143. In spite of the tendency to influence the public, one cannot fail to notice the genuine feeling expressed here, which is also in harmony with countless direct assertions.

[3] Words from the *Histoire de mon temps*, version of 1746, p. 213.

by the conditions of his country in general. For the world of the old aristocratic and corporate community, on which he was dependent, was not entirely suited either for the requirements of power-policy or for the aims of his humanitarian policy. By exerting tremendous strength he forced this world to assume a form that would be as suitable as possible for his own purposes; but it was natural that, of these purposes, the securing of power again took preference over the humanitarian ideals. His real wish, which was to absorb the humanitarian aims into *raison d'état*, could only be fulfilled incompletely. What was ideal yielded to what was elemental in the king's actions, but it still maintained itself in his thought. It was indeed true that he could not succeed by brute strength in achieving his wish, which was to stand on a free soil with a free people. For that he was inwardly still bound far too closely to the limitations of his period and of his *raison d'état*. But the elements which had been capable of producing this wish, were yet in existence in him in a state of historical readiness.

BOOK THREE

MACHIAVELLISM, IDEALISM AND HISTORICISM IN RECENT GERMAN HISTORY

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HEGEL

THERE is, as we have already had frequent occasion to observe in individual instances, a thread of profound conflict running right through the political thought of Western Man since the time of the Renaissance: namely, the conflict between the basic idea of a system of Natural Law governing all thought in general, on the one hand, and the inescapable facts of historical and political life, on the other. The system of Natural Law, created by the Stoa, absorbed and adapted to itself by Christianity, and then secularized once again by the Enlightenment, started out from the assumption that the Laws of Reason and the Laws of Nature were, in the last resort, in harmony with each other, and both proceeded from an all-embracing divine unity of the universe.[1] And moreover that human reason, implanted by God, was capable of comprehending this unity and harmony as a whole, and of determining the content of such laws as would have to be authoritative in human life. It is true that these norms—when faced with the task of governing and ennobling the activity of the baser impulses—were forced into making a number of concessions and compromises with reality; but, as regards their essential and ideal form, they were quite unaffected by this, and continued to remain eternal, unchangeable and homogeneous, as the supreme guiding-light over the whole of life. It was, however, the individual man who consciously had to bear and interpret this divine reason which shaped the soul of Nature; and the perfecting of the individual man was the whole aim and purpose of the precepts laid down by the Laws of Nature and of Reason. Then in the process it happened that the intellectual elements in Nature, in history and in the universe (on the basis of which these precepts had acquired the character of absolute validity) tended, in a naïve fashion, to be assessed exclusively in accordance with the requirements of the individual man; and hence these requirements were projected into the world

[1] The fact that this conception had to come to terms with a dualistic ethic of Christianity, cannot be further demonstrated here, but must simply be noted with reference to what will later be established (see concluding chapter).

and made absolute. World-reason was basically (although no one was clearly aware of the fact) individual reason and a means to the fulfilment and perfecting of the individual. Moreover (it was further assumed) this individual reason was identical in all men; it was for this very reason that it was possible to believe in the absolute validity of their utterances, and to feel that one had hold of something firm and certain. For this reason the intellectual content also of the supra-individual human associations was measured against the same yard-stick, which was not by any means one that had developed out of their own nature and been read off from them. States, corporations, etc., have subsequently therefore acquired the aim of making man, i.e. the individual, better or happier, and of keeping his baser impulses within bounds, to serve as a scourge of evil (as Luther called the State). It was for this purpose that men formed themselves into States, and this idea contains the roots of the doctrine that the State originated in a contract made between men. But political thought has the task of ascertaining which is the best form of the State. Since, here too, it is impossible to avoid making concessions to reality, so also the really existent conditions of State life (conditions which are nothing else but ideal) are on the whole capable of being borne by Christian sentiment as having been willed or permitted by God, as a punishment or a corrective.

But the undeniable facts of historical life signified more than a mere restriction or watering-down of the ideal of reason, due to the imperfection of human nature; nor was it always altogether easy to re-interpret these facts as a form of punishment or correction willed by God. The original and special nature of the State withstood from the very outset any conception of it that looked upon it merely as a mode of organizing men for their own good. It is certainly true that 'the general welfare' became the aim and task of every State that had progressed beyond the crudest stages of State power. But this 'general welfare' not only embraced the welfare of the separate individuals united in the nation; it also embraced the welfare of the collective whole, which signified more than the mere sum of the individuals, and which represented a collective personality. And not only was the people a collective personality, but also the State itself which led them was another such collective personality; indeed it was a much more active one than the mere people, because it was organized and could make its will effective at any instant. The law of this will was *raison d'état*; this was the great discovery that was made by Machiavelli and the school of *ragione di stato*. But this discovery did in fact, without anyone noticing it, shatter the framework of the predominant mode of thought along the lines of the Law of Nature and of Reason. For this latter mode of thought, in accordance with its basically individualistic character, could only interpret the 'general welfare' which the State had to serve, as the

welfare of the individuals united together in it. We were able to establish this particularly in the case of Hobbes and Spinoza. Thus it was recognized and generally held to be known that for the most part the real State did not always serve the general welfare, but that very often it principally served the welfare of the rulers. Consequently, the seventeenth-century theory of *raison d'état* made a distinction, as we have seen, between the good kind of *raison d'état* which contributed to the general welfare and at the same time also to the welfare of the rulers (this being in harmony with the general welfare), and on the other hand the bad kind of *raison d'état* which contributed solely to the welfare of the rulers. And accordingly Conring, in his dissertation on politics which he delivered in 1661 (*Examen rerum publicarum potiorum totius orbis*, *Opera IV*), demanded of every State whose constitution and situation he was discussing, whether and in what degree it devoted itself to the welfare of the collective whole or to the welfare of the rulers. Both types of welfare were, in the process, conceived individualistically, from the standpoint of Natural Law. The welfare and vital interest of the personified State did of course rise far above the merely individual welfare either of the united individuals or of the ruling individuals; and though, if one dealt unswervingly in terms of Natural Law, it could certainly be made valid in practice, it could not be carried through with any consistency.[1]

It is indeed a very instructive and remarkable fact about the history of the idea of *raison d'état* and of the doctrine of State interest that, from the sixteenth until the eighteenth century, it forced its way in like a foreign body, and succeeded in breaking into a predominant mode of thought which was entirely opposed to it. Whatever was said on the subject of *raison d'état* and State interest sprang straight from the vital source of life itself, from the practical needs of States and statesmen. But whatever was said on the subject of the State in general sprang as a rule from the traditions of Natural Law. In the former case it was the individual State, the real State, that was under discussion; in the latter case it was the best form of the State. Thus practical empiricism and the rationalism of Natural Law lived on side by side, often separated like oil and water, often shaken up together in a confused and unorganized manner in the minds of the men who were reflecting on the nature of the State. And, as if competing for the same goal, now one mode of thought was in the lead, and now the other. Empiricism began its career with a great bound of energy, starting with Machiavelli; in him the rationalistic element of Natural Law was confined to certain traditional ideas concerning the framework of the theory, and the rational character of his intellect was entirely subservient to his highly gifted sense for life and for reality. However, the Counter-Reformation

[1] Cf. Zehrfeld, *H. Conrings Staatenkunde*, 1926, pp. 35 and 101.

once more restored the Christian conception of Natural Law to a place of honour; and it produced the compromise doctrine (deriving from Botero) of *ragione di stato*, which clung chiefly to the idea of the best form of the State, but also gave some consideration (though, reluctantly, and with a sense of resignation) to the subject of the real State as it existed. The new wave of empiricism, which became noticeable at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and which coincided in France with the forceful ascendancy of the power-policy of Richelieu, now produced the doctrine of the interests of the various States; this doctrine, since it served purposes that were purely practical, remained free from the rationalistic elements of Natural Law—which was not to say by any means, however, that the men who nursed this doctrine also freed themselves inwardly from this rational mode of thinking in terms of Natural Law. Indeed this latter doctrine, after it had begun to be secularized in the seventeenth century and to take on a new form during the Enlightenment, made a completely new advance, and during the course of the eighteenth century (in view of a freshly-strengthened belief in a world-reason that manifested itself in the individual) it became increasingly bold in its efforts to subdue and adapt the State according to its own conceptions. At the same time however (and particularly also during the later seventeenth century) political empiricism continued to remain strong; and thus it was possible for Pufendorf to present a view of the State which was at the same time generalizing and individualizing in its approach, both rationalistic and empirical, and yet remained pure and therefore stylistically good. The stylistic unity of his view of the State, which was not disturbed by the dualism of his methods, was based on the fact that he really looked at the State more from above, from the standpoint of the rulers, than from below, from the point of view of the needs and aims of the individuals. For he was under the influence of triumphant absolutism.

The great event of the eighteenth century, then, was the fact that, under cover of the ruling absolutism, the middle classes gained in strength both intellectually and socially, and began to exploit the riches of Rational and Natural Law for their own class-interest which was also now gradually acquiring a political tinge. Now for the first time the individualistic seed inherent in the interpretation of the State in terms of Natural Law reached its full development. Men began to look at the State purely from beneath, from the point of view of the inborn rights of humanity, and not from above; and it began to be treated, even more decisively than in earlier times, as a purposive institution aiming at the happiness of individuals. Consequently the theme of *raison d'état* disappeared from the ordinary theoretical discussions, though it continued to remain alive in the practice and tradition of statesmen. At the same time however there was also a further fostering of the doctrine of the

special interests of the various States, on account of the practical needs of absolutist power-policy which rose during the eighteenth century to its classic heights. But, in the process, the old tension between the two fundamentally-opposed principles of rationalism and empiricism became prodigious, and, in the case of Frederick the Great's dualism, the polarity between his humanitarian ideas and his ideas about the power State, it impressed us as being well-nigh shattering.[1] Things were moving towards an acute crisis. The idea of the State, as looked at from beneath, from the point of view of the individual, began to tear itself apart from the real State, as guided from above; and the compromise that had made the two ideas compatible began to be forgotten.

Then the French Revolution occurred. This did indeed attempt to build the State up from below, from the point of view of the goals of individuals; whilst it was felt that the old *raison d'état* of the cabinet (which had now come to be hated) ought to give place to the rational faculty of the human race. The Revolution had opened up new ground by championing the rights of the individual against the State, a matter which had scarcely even been thought of by the seventeenth-century idea of *raison d'état*. But the idea of *raison d'état* itself triumphed over those who despised it by forcing them into its service and making it necessary for them to adopt the same harsh methods—indeed even more frightful methods than such as could be blamed on the immoral cabinet-politics of the eighteenth century. The events of 10th August and the September Massacre of 1792 were the counterpart of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572. On both occasions there was a furious outburst of human bestiality, guided by a *raison d'état* that was carried through without any conditions or limitations. For a state of affairs that was hybrid and impossible and highly dangerous to France came to an end with the elimination of the weakened monarchy which had become dangerous to France for the very reason that its only hope of survival lay in a victory for the country's enemies. But at the same time it also offered the first terrible example of the fact that the power-policy and *raison d'état* of a modern democratic national State are capable of releasing even more daemonic forces than the State of the old aristocratic community.

But, under these circumstances, was the spirit of the French Revolution capable of solving the problem of how to overcome the violent cleavage between empiricism and rationalism, between the actual

[1] The attempt made by many historians of the eighteenth century to use the doctrine of the European balance of power for the purpose of reconciling the egoism of *raison d'état* with the demands of law and morality, was too superficial and pragmatic to acquire any great importance for the history of thought. Cf., regarding this, v. Caemmerer, *Rankes Grosse Mächte und die Geschichtschreibung des 18. Jahrhunderts* in *Studien und Versuche zur neueren Geschichte, Max Lenz-Festschrift*, 1910, p. 283.

existent State and the rational State? By no means. Driven on by the intoxication of power, it continued to advance from one act of brutal *raison d'état* to another, and dressed them up with rhetorical flourishes taken from the intellectual treasury of the rational State and misused for this purpose. Was England—the great opponent of France and Napoleon—able to solve the problem any better? Here too the inner presuppositions for such a solution were lacking. In that country no one felt any inducement to meditate more profoundly on the conflict beween the rational State and the actual existent State, because the actual State which they possessed was felt by the English to be supremely rational; so, with a good conscience, they were enabled also to perceive their real power-interests in a robust manner and without feeling any scruples, and, in order to justify these from an ideal point of view, they could (like the French) make use of humanitarian phrases borrowed from Rational Law, from Christianity and from the Enlightenment. In France and England, it was the actual State, forcefully alive, striding on and upwards from one conflict to another, which so completely dominated thought and feeling that either no one reflected at all about what the verdict of the ideals of Reason on all this was; or else, if one was in opposition against the government, one renewed the never-ending complaint about the sinister spirit of conquest.

But now in Germany it was certainly possible for people to feel an impulse to bring about a more profound reconciliation between the actual existent State and the ideals of Reason. It was more possible for a prostrate and dismembered State, than for a triumphant and growing State, to feel a painful inducement towards making this reconciliation. The Holy Roman Empire, with its easy-going liberty for all classes in the Empire, with the air of ease and venerability which it emanated, collapsed on account of its own powerlessness. In this painful situation there were only two courses left open to the intellectual German: one was to separate finally the destiny of the German intellect from that of the German State and to seek refuge in the quiet sanctity of one's own mind in order to build up a purely spiritual and intellectual world; the other was to create a sensible and harmonious relationship between this intellectual world and the real world, and then also at the same time go on to seek a bond of unity between the actual existent State and the rational ideal. When this was successful, there had to arise a completely new and hitherto undreamt-of relationship between reason and reality. Then they were no longer interlarded with fictions and compromises in order to present an appearance of unity, as in the Stoic, Christian and worldly doctrine of the Law of Nature which had never been intellectually capable of bridging the gap between the absolute norms of Reason and the actual laws and processes of historical life. On the contrary, they did essentially fuse together, they became identical. This

succeeded in achieving what Spinoza had attempted to do with his pantheism, but what he had been prevented from doing by the mechanical and unhistorical modes of thought of his time. A successful attempt was now made to grasp the reason that was inherent in historical reality itself, and to comprehend this as its kernel, its innermost law of existence. Now it was not the mere individual, but rather history itself that came to bear and interpret reason. The unity of the divine nature now made itself manifest in the historical world. But then *raison d'état* and power-policy also appeared in an entirely new light.

This was the great and epoch-making achievement of Hegel. According to the final form of his doctrine, the actual and existent State is also at the same time the rational State. 'Whatever is rational, is actual and existent; and whatever is actual, is rational.' [1] In order to be able to say this, he did indeed have to re-interpret the concept of reason and make it fluid; he had to strip away the stable character which its norms had hitherto possessed, and transform the norms themselves into a form of life that was fluid and yet continuously ascending, transform them into the developmental process of historical humanity. Then it was no longer necessary either for the new concept of reason to come to grief among the contradictions and apparently insoluble antitheses; for by means of his dialectic, which for the first time penetrated right deep down into the real process by which historical events grew and happened, he accepted these antitheses as a necessary vehicle for progress and improvement in itself. And this meant that he admitted (to an extent which in earlier times would never have been thought possible) that there was a collective causal connection between history itself and all its more sinister and murky aspects. Everything, absolutely everything serves to promote the progressive self-realization of divine reason; and what is peculiarly subtle and cunning about it is that it forces into its service even what is elemental, indeed even what is actually evil. And if anyone is scared by the inference that this would oblige one to acknowledge the relative justice of evil, then he would refer them to the sublime view of life which he himself achieved at the height of his system—a view that was capable of being at the same time both esoteric and exoteric, because it ventured to assert that everything esoterically beautiful was necessarily bound up with the existence of everything exoterically unbeautiful: 'The chief thing is then to recognize, in the mere appearance of what is temporal and transient, the substance that is immanent there and the eternal element that is present there. For that which is rational (that is to say, ideal) does, by virtue of presenting itself in external existence in all its actuality, therefore present itself in an infinite profusion of forms, shapes and appearances, and encloses its root-kernel in a bright outer covering, which is the immediate dwelling-place of

[1] *Philosophie des Rechts*, 1821, p. xix.

consciousness, and which conceptual thought must first penetrate, in order to detect the inner pulse, and thus feel it beating in the external configurations too.' [1]

But of all the bright and manifold images that formed the outer covering of history, there was none in Hegel's opinion that came nearer to the root-kernel than the State. It was in the State that his sharp sense of reality discerned the most powerful and efficacious, the all-pervasive factor in the history of the human race. Whatever his empiricism discerned, had to be sanctioned by his idealism. But then the soul of the State—*raison d'état* and the seed of Machiavelli's doctrine—had to be sanctioned also. And so something quite new and extraordinary occurred: Machiavellism came to form an integral part in the complex of an idealist view of the universe, a view which at the same time embraced and confirmed all moral values—whereas in former times Machiavellism had only been able to exist alongside the moral cosmos that had been built up. What happened now was almost like the legitimization of a bastard.

Thus, in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Machiavelli began to be received with honour once again. A specifically German attitude towards the problem of Machiavellism came to develop—a fact which could not indeed be considered to be due solely to the doctrine and influence of Hegel. Hegel himself—who viewed all intellectual phenomena as being merely the manifestation (conditioned by a particular historical situation and stage of development) of a given national spirit, and who considered that all the separate national spirits were in their turn directed by the world-spirit—would have contemptuously refused to accept for himself any such purely personal compliment, and would have referred it to the great architect of the world, who was using him as a mouthpiece. First and foremost it was necessary to assess the historical situation of Germany. Hitherto Germany had always tended to be more passive than active, in the great power-policies of Europe. It was therefore impossible for her to develop a fixed and definite tradition of long usage in power politics, such as existed in France and England. Hence, for any thinking German, power-policy was not something that existed of its own accord; on the contrary, it was to a certain extent an article imported from abroad, whose usefulness or harmfulness could be argued about. Even the seventeenth-century German advocates of the doctrine of *raison d'état* had the feeling that they were handling a plant that was not native to German soil. Nor did Frederick the Great's theory of power-policy have any of the character of organic self-evidence born of the whole history of the nation; it suggested rather a conscious effort to master a great art which had sooner or later to be learnt. Then when there came

[1] *Philosophie des Rechts*, 1821, p. xx.

a period of collapse, as after the revolutionary wars and under the rule of Napoleon, it was possible for those living in a Germany that was suffering tribulation (precisely because the country was unarmed and forced to suffer) to hanker after the weapons of power, and hence too after the weapons of Machiavellism, with a certain awe and longing. At first there were only a few who did this. But amongst these few who felt that Germany needed a national armament of power Hegel was perhaps the first, and certainly the one with the most powerful mind. He felt it already at the beginning of the new century and before even he had established his system in its final and definitive form. And, since this too was only the final consolidation of certain original component parts of his thought, the supposition immediately presents itself that his sanctioning of Machiavellism was also connected with those fundamental tendencies in his mind, and that both personality and the historical situation contributed simultaneously to produce it. It so happens that Hegel's early development has recently been re-edited and presented in a masterly manner; therefore we shall confine ourselves to picking out those mental threads of his that might have led to the recognition of Machiavellism.[1]

Hegel's early development is a profoundly stirring drama. It shows the old and eternally new process by which a forceful and original mind, still dependent at first on the collective ideas of his time, but then beginning to confront them, painfully and inconsistently with his own obscure needs, step by step overcomes them, recasts them, subordinates and adapts them to his own needs, and thus gradually acquires the strength to build up an entirely new intellectual edifice. It is the story of how a genius discovers itself and learns to speak its own language, in order to satisfy completely the innermost needs that are inherent in him.

What were the ideas he had to face, what did he set up in opposition to them, and what final result did he achieve?

He found himself faced with a type of individualism which judged historical life and the State according to the requirements and the standards of the rational individual striving for intellectual and spiritual freedom; it was an individualism which chiefly demanded of him that he should respect the sacred rights of the individual. This demand, which found expression in the Declaration of the Rights of Men and of Citizens in 1789, was originally accepted even by Hegel: and, as a young teacher at the University of Tübingen, he welcomed the French Revolution. But, still quite early on, he became conscious of an obscure need for something quite different, of a need to overcome the blank opposition between the State and the individual, of the need for an unbroken unity

[1] I also recollect with gratitude the investigation by Heller: *Hegel und der nationale Machtstaatsgedanke in Deutschland*, 1921, but I can only partly endorse it.

of life that would embrace them both. Then once again the ancient world would be able to exercise its inexhaustible power on a youthful mind thirsting after an exemplary model. It was in the Greek city-state that he found the realization of this unity. In 1796, with the deepest sympathy, he sketched out the picture of Greek Man at his most flourishing period, the type of man for whom the idea of his State and fatherland constituted the final purpose of the world, and who allowed his own individuality to dwindle away before this idea, because he himself was realizing the idea of his own activity and thus producing the supreme unity of life—the Absolute, which (as he was already expressing it even then) [1] 'Reason can never stop looking for'. When Reason was no longer able to find this in the degenerate State of antiquity, it found it in the Christian religion. But (according to his opinion at that time) this was a symptom of decay, of a loss in the unity of life. Christianity could only be accepted by a 'corrupt humanity' who had lost their fatherland and their own free State, and now in their misery took up the doctrine of the corruption of human nature as a consolation. 'It honoured that which is shameful; it sanctified and perpetuated eternally this incapacity, by actually making it a sin to be capable of believing in the possibility of strength.'

Thus one of Machiavelli's basic feelings came to life in him. Christianity (the latter had said), by setting men's thoughts on the world to come, made them ineffective and slack in the affairs of this world. He therefore longed to recover the natural *virtù* of the men of antiquity with all its splendour and, most of all, with the strength it placed at the service of the State. There was even a similarity in the historical situation which evoked such similar moods in these two thinkers separated by three hundred years. Then as now, an epoch of political collapse coincided with an epoch of intellectual and spiritual renewal. Even at this time, and in the following years which brought the collapse of the old Empire, Hegel was already perceiving with increasing distinctness that the old world was going to pieces. His mind, which was becoming ripe for supreme achievements, was already searching amongst the ruins of the old world, trying to find those forces that would be capable of building a new and stronger edifice and restoring the broken connection between individual existence and the universal forces of life. For this was the basic feeling in the young Hegel, out of which everything that followed really grew: namely, the feeling that this indispensable connection between individual life and the universal life of the nation seemed to be destroyed by a process of development which was now being brought to a necessary end by the catastrophes of the revolutionary wars. These catastrophes drove the majority of intellectual Germans straight back into themselves to take shelter within

[1] *Hegels theolog. Jugendschriften;* edited by Nohl, p. 224.

their own personality. The enormous intellectual and spiritual wealth which Germany accumulated during the first decade of the new century was created under the obscure pressure of a hard political fate. It was misfortune that drove us then to the summit of our political existence. This was also true of Hegel himself, who took part quite consciously and clear-sightedly in the life of his period. But that which (in addition to this acute consciousness) distinguished him from most of his contemporaries, was that very early on he felt certain that this situation was unnatural and would not last; that real life and intellectual life could not long remain so rigidly separated from each other without it becoming likely that a new collapse would occur, bringing with it also an intellectual collapse. 'The condition of Man (whom the times have forced to take refuge in an inner world) can either become simply one of perpetual death, that is if he remains in this inner world; or else, if nature impels him to life, his condition can only be one of endeavour, striving to do away with the negative element in the existing world, in order to enjoy himself and find himself there, and in order to be able to live. . . . The sense that nature is at variance with life as it is, shows the need for Man's condition to be raised up; and so it will be raised up, once that life, as it is at present, has lost all its power and all its prestige, once it has become a pure negation. All the phenomena of this period show that satisfaction is no longer to be found in life as it was.'

These are words of the greatest weight and historical import. They reflect the whole compressed intellectual power of Germany, thrust back by life, but already preparing itself to hit back at life with all its force. They are taken from the obscure and difficult fragment entitled *Freiheit und Schicksal* (*Freedom and Destiny*) which was to form the introduction to his work on the German constitution. This piece (which, though written during the winter of 1801–2, was not published in its entirety until 1893) [1] also provides us with the first decisive comments that Hegel made regarding the problem of Machiavellism.

Let us first review the things that introduced him to it: dissatisfaction with the simple consolidation of individuality, an increasingly strong perception of the way in which the individual was dependent on the fateful forces of universal life, though this did not lead to a merely passive surrender, but instead to the active ideal of the ancient *virtù*, to living in and for a State which was worth the sacrifice of one's whole life. In addition, there was the terrible drama to be witnessed of great fateful forces at work in the French Revolution and in the collapse of the Empire—something that meant more to the Swabian than to any other German, for to him it represented the 'State', which nevertheless was now no longer a real State. 'Germany is no longer a State' were the

[1] We are quoting here according to the edition arranged by Heller in *Reclams Bibliothek.*

opening words of the book. For it is only by means of power that a State really becomes a State (p. 25). 'For a collection of countries to form a State, it is necessary that they should have a common defence and State authority' (p. 27). It is not the tranquillity of peace, but the activity of war, that shows the strength of the connection between all the parts and the whole (p. 12). During the war with the French Republic, Germany experienced for herself that she was no longer a State. And the peace, to which it had led, would show that, apart from those countries that fell under the dominion of the conqueror, many more States still would lose that which was their most precious possession: namely, to constitute States on their own.

This was the new—or perhaps, rather, re-acquired—recognition that the most essential attribute of all for a State was power, that is to say the ability to maintain itself against other States. All practical *raison d'état* and all the theoretical deliberations on the subject during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been guided by this principle; whilst the parallel mode of viewing the State in terms of Natural Law had for the most part been unaffected by it. But a man like Hegel was absolutely incapable of being satisfied with the merely empirical and realistic recognition that the power-State existed; on the contrary, he felt obliged to incorporate this new knowledge in a unified and rational picture of the world. In order to be able to do this, Hegel had to break an entirely new and original path for himself, a path which led him at first through gloomy and rocky country. He had, as it were, to roll aside the rocks that hindered him, and looking at these even today one can get some idea of the force with which he struggled and searched.[1]

At first it was not possible for Hegel to shape his new ideas, which were leading him away from the predominant individualism, without having a certain feeling of reaction and recoil when the passionate subjectivity in him began to struggle violently. One understands this, when one becomes aware that the new guiding lights which he began to follow were at first only capable of shedding on him a cold light that brought little consolation. When corresponding with Hölderlin towards the end of the 'nineties, he acknowledged an idea of destiny that ruled over human life with omnipotence and rigidity. The idea that individuals and nations were dependent on an unknown superhuman power of fate then became insupportable; it even became insupportable for the iron mode of thought of a man like Hegel. The vital unity between the Self, the Nation, the State and the Universe, for which he was seeking, was not to be reached along this path. This harsh and unyielding block had to be hacked up. So his concept of destiny began gradually to change, to move closer to the human and historical spheres, to take advantage

[1] We are following here the profound work by Rosenzweig: *Hegel und der Staat*, 2 vols., 1920.

of its own particular innermost powers and thereby become filled with intellect and reason—until finally, at the very height of his system, destiny turned into world-spirit, of which reason itself made up the sole content, and which led on to his self-manifestation in the galaxy of nation-spirits, by which in turn world-history was evoked, shaped and guided.

When, in 1801–2, Hegel wrote down his ideas about the constitution of Germany, his picture of the world had not yet reached this stage; his concept of destiny had certainly already acquired a lively historical content and, most of all, had taken up the State as the essential agent of the force of destiny, but it had not yet assumed the advanced and passionate status of a world-reason that could reconcile everything. But certainly that decisive idea had already been grasped, which was to assume so great a significance in Hegel's later system and which can be looked upon as his particular magic formula for dealing with all contradictions and discrepancies in the world-picture, for simultaneously acknowledging the irrationality and uncleanliness of historical reality as a whole, enabling one to tolerate these (with a calm sense of the world and universe as a whole) as being mere phenomena of the foreground, as being mere dissonance which is resolved in the harmony, if only one looks at things from the highest summit of existence. Then indeed all the rich and variegated activity of history had to be re-interpreted as being merely the play of marionettes that were being guided by a higher hand. The freedom and individual licence which had previously been accorded to all historical forces to vent themselves freely, thereby became merely an apparent freedom, merely an apparent right. Let us hear what he himself had to say in his work on the constitution.

'The original unsubdued character of the German Nation has been determined by the iron necessity of its destiny. Within the sphere marked out by its destiny, a mighty and apparently orderless game was played out by politics, religion, need, virtue, authority, reason, cunning and all the other forces that move the human race, upon the wide arena that was allowed to them. Each one conducts itself as an absolutely free and independent force, and has no consciousness that they are all tools in the hands of higher forces, of aboriginal destiny and all-conquering time, forces that can smile at this "freedom" and this "independence".'

This marionette theory is the key to an understanding of Hegel's idea of the power-State. His sense for power in general was certainly not without an elemental root in his own individual nature. He himself had, as has been correctly pointed out,[1] the aptitude to become a man of power. But even stronger than his own individual need for power was his contemplative impulse, leading him to interpret power (and all

[1] Heller, *loc. cit.*, p. 61.

the other phenomena of life) as being mere appearances emanating from a supreme and invisible authority of existence, whose influence then became felt only as power in the highest sense of the word. It was because (and only because) there did exist such a supreme and all-embracing power, that it was possible also to grant to all the visible and phenomenal forces of historical life a free (though indeed only apparently free) scope, for each of these forces received its mandate and its requisite strength from the hand of the supreme power. Then however it was also necessary to understand the particular mandate and the particular individual strength of each one of them, to comprehend it by means of its own individual dynamic action, and not apply to it standards from any other sphere of life. In order to discern the supreme truth, it was first necessary to recognize the truth that lay in the separate things themselves. It was in this way that, in Hegel's phrase, 'the truth that resided in power' was discovered, and that politics was freed from the precepts of ordinary morality and from the ideal claims of individuals.

Once again, we shall let him speak for himself. He was dealing with the fact that Sweden, after being drawn into the Thirty Years War in order to save the freedom of the German conscience and the German State, became in the process a conquering power in Germany. 'On account of idealistic visions of the altruistic computation of political and religious freedom, men are foolish enough to overlook, in the fervent heat of their enthusiasm, that truth which resides in power; thus they are led on to put a firm faith in an artificial human system of justice and made-up dreams in the face of the higher justice of nature and of truth, although this higher justice makes use of necessity in order to enforce its authority on men, in despite of any conviction of theory or inner fervency.' It was therefore a form of 'justice that a foreign power, which is allowed by a weaker State to take part in its domestic affairs, should succeed in acquiring certain possessions in that weaker State'.

'It is the philanthropists and the moralists who decry politics as a contest and an artificial skill in trying to get an advantage for oneself at the expense of justice, as a system created by injustice; and it is the impartial beer-swilling public (that is to say, a mere multitude, lacking any genuine interest or fatherland, and whose ideal of virtue is the tranquillity of the ale-house) that blames politics for breach of faith or an unjust fickleness; or else this same public at the very least takes some interest in, and is suspicious of, the legal form in which the interests of its State are presented. If these interests are identical with their own, then they will also defend the legal form; but the true inner force that drives them is their own interests and not those of the State.' The kind of justice which is dealt with in the relations between States is

nothing else but 'the advantage, acknowledged and secured by agreements, of one State'. And 'it entirely depends on the circumstances, on the combinations of power (i.e. on political *judgment*), whether the interest and justice that are endangered should be defended with all the might of power; in that case, however, the other part would also be able to plead a right and a justice on its side, for it also possesses that very opposed interest which is producing the collision, and thus possesses a right too. And the war (or whatever one can call it) now has the task of deciding, not which of the two rights maintained by the different parties is the truly just one—for both sides have a truly just right—but rather which of the rights shall give way to the other' (p. 110 f.).

It is the old doctrine of the interests of States that is being proclaimed here once again. Hegel was familiar with the history and the political literature of the previous century, and made his appeal to it. 'It is a generally known and recognized principle that this special interest (of the State) is the most important consideration' (p. 118). There was however one thing about it that was new and revolutionary. The earlier harsher doctrine of *raison d'état* had admitted the presence of a conflict between politics, and morality and justice, and had only maintained that politics was supreme and victorious in this conflict. Whereas Hegel was bold enough to deny altogether that this conflict existed, for 'it is impossible that this most important consideration should be taken to be in conflict with rights and duties or with morality'; 'the State has no higher duty than that of maintaining itself' (p. 129). This meant that Hegel broke with the dualism of standards and *Weltanschauung*, and went over to a monistic ethic and view of the world which was in the last resort pantheistic. The contrast here was no longer one between moral and immoral, it was rather between a lower and a higher type of morality and duty; and the State's duty to maintain itself was declared to be the supreme duty of the State, and ethical sanction was thereby given to its own selfish interest and advantage. For in all conflicts of interest and triumphs of power there was revealed a 'higher justice of nature and truth'. Not all the consecratory pronouncements had yet been made which the later Hegelian philosophy of history was to lavish on the world-spirit's conduct of empirical history, and the throne for the world-spirit was still, as it were, unoccupied and veiled as yet in the obscure cloud of the concept of destiny; but the throne had already been established, and reverence was already being demanded for it.

Now, too, Machiavelli was called before this throne and released from the 'seal of disapproval' which general opinion had set on him, and he was now heaped with the highest honours and praises. His book about the Prince was 'the supremely great and true conception of a

real political mind, having the most noble and important significance'. Amid a general situation of disorganization and blindness, he (as it is expressed in Hegel's early work) 'grasped with a cool circumspection the necessary idea that Italy should be saved by being combined into one State'. Hegel believed that, in his own later day, 'this idea of a State which should constitute a nation' was being drowned by a blind yell for freedom; and that all the misery of Germany, and all the experience gathered from the French frenzy after liberty, would perhaps not be sufficient to make the nations believe in this idea. But that did not in any way diminish the 'necessity' of this idea. Hegel also used it to justify Machiavelli's methods which had been considered abominable, and he poured scorn on the trivialities of ordinary morality. 'There can be no question here of any choice of means. A situation, in which poison and assassination have become customary weapons, is not compatible with soft counter-measures. Life, which is nearly in a state of putrefaction, can only be reorganized by the most forceful action.'

The fact that he recognized both Machiavelli's aim and his methods, certainly did not mean (as these words already indicate) that Hegel looked upon *The Prince* as being a sort of compendium applicable to any period. He expressly rejected this. The only part that seemed to him valid for all time was the root-kernel of the doctrine, that the idea of a State, which ought to form one nation, should be brought to realization by means of all the methods necessary for that purpose. The particular methods used by Machiavelli seemed to him transient and of their time, not to be generally imitated, and only understandable in the context of the special situation of Italy at that time. And even these he attempted to justify by means of a somewhat high-handed juridical argument. Namely that Machiavelli, starting from the idea that Italy ought to form one State, was obliged to act as if Italy were already a State. But then the opponents within the State were nothing less than criminals, and if the State annihilated them in no uncertain manner, it was only administering punishment as a judge. 'That which would be abominable if it were done by one private person to another, or by one State to another State or to a private person, must in this case be considered a just punishment.' This shows that Hegel still had a certain hesitation, when faced with the consequences of a limitless Machiavellism. He also admitted thereby that not all methods were permissible in a conflict between States. Thus, a fragment of the old dualistic ethic was projecting here into the new realm of monistic and pantheistic ideas—offering an initial sign that not all the problems of political ethics could be resolved by this means alone. If Hegel had not committed this inconsistency, he would have been obliged to end up with a ruthlessly naturalistic doctrine of power, and with a *raison*

d'état which had its limits only in expediency and advantage, and not in any kind of moral feeling. But his fundamental sense of idealism recoiled before such a prospect.

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This work of Hegel's, rich in powerful ideas, and forming a counterpart of equal stature to *The Prince* of Machiavelli, remained unknown to his contemporaries. His desire for a Theseus who would save and unite Germany as a State (something that he modelled on a similar wish of Machiavelli's) was only half fulfilled. For the great Theseus personalities who arose during the period of the rise and reform of Prussia, though they were certainly capable of saving Germany, were not yet however capable of uniting her as a State. Hegel himself had indeed also expressed the sceptical opinion that the outcry for liberty among his contemporaries would drown the need for forming a national State. Again, this opinion too was half confirmed and half refuted by the development of the political spirit in Germany. For a long time to come the liberal idea still showed itself stronger than the idea of a national State; the wishes of the Germans for liberty in opposition to the absolutist police-State were expressed more forcibly than their wishes for unity. But these wishes too awoke during the period of the Wars of Liberation, and from decade to decade they became more alive and effective. Gradually more and more, however, they came to be linked with the new ideas of power politics which Hegel had been the first in Germany to express. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, after the collapse of the hopes of unity founded on the power of popular opinion, the conviction began to spread that it would have to be the power of the State which was to pave the way to unity—the power of the State, guided by its own special interest, namely *raison d'état*. Both thought and experience had combined to produce this conviction. Experience embraced all the historical events that had befallen the German people during the nineteenth century. But the thought of the men who led the movement for unity had been brought to fruition to a great extent (which cannot be measured with certainty) by the Hegelian philosophy, which, in its final form, also included the doctrines of power politics contained in his early work; indeed it was now for the first time that these doctrines were elevated to the highest place they could attain to, and were thereby raised to a position of supreme efficacy.

It is not necessary, for the context of our investigations, to follow out stage by stage the development of the Hegelian idea of the power-State separately and in all its connections with his system as a whole. This task has been accomplished, in outline at least, by Heller, even if

his work does contain certain exaggerations and distortions; and Rosenzweig's profound book, which presents Hegel's whole philosophy, also deals with this matter properly. It is enough for our purposes, if we first of all recapitulate the final formulations which Hegel gave to the idea of *raison d'état*, and then insert these into the historical context of the problem we are treating.

In the *Philosophy of Right* of 1821, Hegel gave the following interpretation of the idea of *raison d'état* in its operation against other States (§§ 336 and 337): 'Since States are related to one another as autonomous entities and so as *particular* wills on which the very validity of treaties depends, and since the *particular will* of the whole is in content a will for its own welfare pure and simple, it follows that welfare is the highest law governing the relation of one State to another. This is all the more the case since the Idea of the State is precisely the supersession of the clash between right (i.e. empty abstract freedom) and welfare (i.e. the particular content which fills that void), and it is when States become *concrete* wholes that they first attain recognition. The substantial welfare of the State is its welfare as a *particular* State in its specific interest and situation and its no less special foreign affairs, including its particular treaty relations. Its government therefore is a matter of *particular wisdom*, not of universal Providence. Similarly, its aim in relation to other States and its principle for justifying wars and treaties is not a universal thought (the thought of philanthropy) but only its actually injured or threatened welfare *as something specific and peculiar to itself*.'

With this he linked certain observations on the relationship between politics and morals. The welfare of the State, he remarked, has a quite different justification from that of the welfare of an individual person, 'and the ethical substance, the State, has its determinate being, i.e. its right, directly embodied in something existent, something not abstract but concrete, and the principle of its conduct and behaviour can only be this concrete existent and not one of the many universal thoughts supposed to be moral commands. When politics is alleged to clash with morals and so to be always wrong, the doctrine propounded rests on superficial ideas about morality, the nature of the State, and the State's relation to the moral point of view.'

In these propositions one can still discern the starting-point of the Hegelian idea of the power-State, his dissatisfaction with the mere structure of personal individuality, and his sense of the supra-individual fateful force of the State (which however constrained individuals into its service)—in short, the primacy of the State over the individual. But, as was properly consistent with the Hegelian dialectic, there now arose, out of the defeat of ordinary individualism, a new and higher individualism—higher because it also recognized the individuality of

the supra-individual essence of the State and transferred to this the rights which might have been claimed for the separate individual. At the summit of his philosophy, Hegel now conceived of the State in general as an 'individual totality', which developed in a quite concrete manner in accordance with its own special and peculiar vital laws, and which was thereby both permitted and obliged to set aside ruthlessly even the universal moral commands. By doing so, it did not (as his words show) behave immorally, but rather according to the spirit of a higher morality which was superior to the universal and customary morality. What this consisted in, he made clear in his philosophy of history. 'The morality of the State is not the moral, the reflective element, whereby personal conviction is the ruling element; the latter is more accessible to the modern world, whereas the true and ancient type has its roots in the principle that everyone has his duty.' [1] Thus his youthful ideal, dedicated to antiquity, the ideal of a citizen sacrificing himself to the State, was expressed here once again, and helped to strengthen the doctrine that the State ought to be activated by its own most personal interest, and not by any universal moral commands.

But (though not so much for Hegel as for his contemporaries and successors in Germany) the strongest support for this doctrine lay, both now and ever afterwards, in the new sense of the individuality of the supra-individual powers, that is to say, in German historicism. This extends our horizon beyond Hegel's intellectual sphere into the general movement of the German mind at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The decisive point was that everywhere now, both in the Classical and the Romantic camps, men broke with the old traditions of a Natural Law that was Stoic and Christian, and then was once more secularized by the Enlightenment; as we remarked earlier on, this conception of Natural Law started out from the reason of the individual, but it looked upon this reason as being identical in all individuals, and consequently granted all its claims and commands an absolute validity. Hence arose the ideal of the best form of the State; and hence arose the demand that this best form of State should also be entirely subordinated to the universal moral law. But now in Germany men freed themselves from believing in the absolute validity and uniformity of reason and of its ideals and commands, and began to comprehend the individual manifoldness of all the forces of life, and also the fact that in each of these there ruled a special individual reason.[2] Schleiermacher, in his Monologue of 1800, expressed in the

[1] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, edited by G. Lasson, 1, 94.

[2] Cf. chiefly Ernst Troeltsch, *Der Historismus und seine Probleme*, 1922; also my review *Ernst Troeltsch und das Problem des Historismus* in the *Deutsche Nation*, March 1923.

most concise and meaningful manner this sudden swing round which he had experienced in himself. 'For a long time it was sufficient for me, only to have found reason. And I believed in the uniformity of one existence, as honouring what was single and supreme; there could only be *one Right* for every instance, action would have to be the same in all cases.' But now he had been seized by 'the idea of the peculiarity of individual existence'; he was now impelled to seek for some higher moral element; now he could no longer rest content with the idea that humanity was solely a uniform mass, which externally appeared to be divided into parts, but in such a way that it was all really the same. 'So there broke upon me something that has since exalted me in the extreme; it became clear to me that each man ought to represent humanity in himself in his own different way, by his own special blending of its elements, so that it should reveal itself in each special manner, and, in the fullness of space and time, should become everything that can emerge as something individual out of the depths of itself.'

Here Schleiermacher was speaking chiefly about the individuality of separate beings, and of the superior morality of the individual element in them; he had not yet reached the stage of speaking of the State as an 'individual totality', or about any superior morality residing in it. But even then (as another famous passage in his Monologue shows) he was casting his eye towards a new, higher concept of the State, which, everlastingly exalted above a mere mechanism, should demand for itself all the innermost powers of men, but should also raise and extend these towards the supreme development of human existence.[1] Out of the deepening individualism of the individual being, there henceforth arose on all sides in Germany, now in this way, now in that, a new and more living picture of the State; and there arose, too, a new image of the world which looked upon the world as being filled with individuality, and saw at work in every individuality, both personal and superpersonal, a special characteristic vital law, and thus learned to comprehend Nature and History collectively as an 'abyss of individuality' (in Friedrich Schlegel's phrase). For everything individual proceeded out of the unified womb of the divine nature. Individuality everywhere, and an identity between mind and nature, and by means of this identity an invisible but strong bond cast about all that individual fullness which would otherwise seep away—those were the new and powerful ideas which now burst forth in Germany in this or that form. It was perhaps the greatest revolution in thought that has been experienced in the West. For the belief that had ruled hitherto in a comprehensible unity and uniformity, and hence in an absolute validity of reason and its claims, was now destroyed and dissolved by the recognition that reason revealed itself in endlessly manifold forms, that it laid down

[1] Cf. Günther Holstein, *Die Staatsphilosophie Schleiermachers*, 1922.

individual and not general laws of life, and that its ultimate unity lay only in an invisible metaphysical foundation of the universe. Everything in history now looked different from what it did before: no longer superficially simple and easily viewable, but instead full of perspectives and with immeasurable depths in the distance; and it was no longer composed (as one had thought previously) of an eternal recurrence of something that was the same, but rather of an eternal rebirth of what was peculiar to itself and without comparison. This richer and more profound image of the world, created by the German historicism that was now coming into existence, demanded a more resilient mode of thought, and a more complex and imaginative abstract language, with a tendency to mystical obscurity. Cicero, Thomas Aquinas and Frederick the Great, if they had read each other's works, would have been able to understand each other, because all three of them spoke the easily intelligible abstract language of Natural Law. In the works of Herder, Goethe, Hegel and the Romantics, they would have found words and ideas which would have bewildered them, and would have seemed to them incomprehensible and odd.

This new sense for what was individual resembled a fire which was capable of consuming (not all at once, but gradually) every sphere of life; to begin with, in many ways, it got a hold only on the flimsiest and most inflammable materials, as it were, the individual personal life, chiefly the world of art and poetry, but then it also caught the heavier materials, most of all the State. And Hegel was the first to pass over deliberately, indeed even in a one-sidedly radical manner, from the cult of personal individualism to the cult of the supra-individual entity of the State. Now for the first time, against the background of this general tendency to view life in an individualizing manner, it is possible to understand completely that act of his by which he re-interpreted the concept of reason, from being the static force it was before, into the fluid developmental process of historical humanity. For this meant to re-interpret it in such a way as to bring out the wealth of the individualities that were unfolding. In each one of them the single divine reason assumed a special and concrete form, and the highest and most influential of these forms seemed to him to be the States. But together with the recognition of the individual character of the States, there was also bound up the recognition of their vital arteries, namely *raison d'état* and State interest; and its power to constrain everything else, the primacy of its Right over any other Right, was (as we have seen) plainly recognized. The individual State with its special impulses towards power and life, this State which in previous centuries had only been able to lead a life which, though indeed a forceful one, was nevertheless an unholy one, now received all the reverence that the new cult of individuality was capable of giving it. The old dualism between the

individual or actual State, and the best or rational State, ceased. The actual State was the rational State.

Thus Hegel shared completely the new sense for what was individual in history, and thereby became one of the most effective pioneers of German historicism. The lasting value, and whatever inner vitality there is in his philosophy of history, is based essentially on this sense of the great historical individualities. But with him it never became the chief thing; he never devoted himself to it with the profound joy and enthusiasm shown by the Romantics and the founders of the German historical school. To him, both now and ever afterwards, it was only a means to an end, it was the key to the peculiar sanctity of his picture of the world in which the whole individual wealth of the historical world now became assembled and compressed into a single and unique divinity of the world-reason, the world-spirit. This world-reason was certainly interpreted (as we have noted) as being the fluid and increasing life of humanity; but at the same time also, and to an even greater extent, it was interpreted and valued as being the unified and superior leader and controller of this whole bright and varied drama, as being the force that worked the marionettes of history. Everything individual serves to realize the single and unique reason, which has the particular skill of enticing into its service the evil elements as well as the good, the elemental as well as the intellectual and spiritual. Of the two great principal ideas of the time, the idea of identity and the idea of individuality, it was the idea of identity, of the struggle towards the inner unity and apotheosis of nature and mind, which was far and away the stronger in Hegel. But at the same time, in this need to subordinate everything empirical and cause it to proceed from one unique rational idea, there was also at work the whole secular tradition of the Stoa, of Christianity and of the Enlightenment. Even the individual element in history was thereby rationalized once again, and now indeed at the same time (although he acknowledged it in general) it was deprived of its own most individual and original essence. It constituted the most remarkable and intensive synthesis of old and new ideas, of ideas tending towards viewing things in absolute terms or in historical terms. They were confined together as in a prison.

In this prison there was also (as we have seen) the idea of *raison d'état*. It had a cell to itself in which it could move and operate freely and without hindrance. Indeed it was one of the very biggest cells in the prison. For according to Hegel it was the State, guided by *raison d'état*, that performed the most important services towards making world-reason a reality. He was obliged to place the State as high as this, because he needed it to authenticate his grand conception that the world-spirit realized itself progressively in and through history. In history he now needed a power like the State which, in a special and manifest

degree, would act as the bearer of rational purposes, and would at the same time be a bearer that dominated the whole of human life. 'It is solely through the State that Man has any value, or any spiritual and intellectual reality.' [1] He also needs the State to form a bond of union between the two great ideas of his time, the idea of individuality and the idea of identity, between the individual welfare and the general welfare. It was the State that created 'the unity of the universal and the subjective Will'; and it was in this conjunction between the Will of everything universal and the subjective Will of individuals, that he saw the essence of the State, its living moral quality.[2] For the sake of his universal philosophy of history (which orientated everything towards the Whole, and ruthlessly subordinated every individual thing to that Whole), he needed to have inside the empirical world some 'universal element', some power that dominated individuals. Hence his deification of the State.

And since everything which there was in him of an individualizing and historicizing mode of thought was concentrated principally on the State, he was also able to comprehend in the clearest possible fashion the inner essence of *raison d'état*, its abysses and its tensions between elemental and intellectual motives, the use it made of the good and its misuse of the evil elements. 'It is as particular entities that States enter into relations with one another. Hence their relations are on the largest scale a maelstrom of external contingency and the inner particularity of passions, private interests and selfish ends, abilities and virtues, vices, force and wrong. All these whirl together, and in their vortex the ethical whole itself, the autonomy of the State, is exposed to contingency [3] —a contingency, however, which, through the operation and guidance of the world-spirit, is completely smoothed out once again and finally brought to a successful outcome. From the standpoint of the world-spirit, he gazed down with a macroscopic irony upon all this activity of power. Indeed, in his *Philosophy of History* [4] one may read the delightful passage about the Romans: 'It is a peculiarity of the Romans that they, who have the greatest system of justice in world history, also avail themselves of the petty justice of manifestos and agreements over small injuries, and defend these almost in a spirit of partisanship. But, in the case of political complications of this kind, it is always possible for anyone to reproach another if he wishes to, and if it is useful to him to make the reproach.' Thus, in the same breath, he satirized and tolerated the old device of power, of cloaking its interests in the disguise of morality and justice.

In the *Philosophy of History*, Machiavelli was also given similar

[1] *Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, edited by Lasson, 1, 90.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 90 f.
[3] *Philosophie des Rechts*, § 340.
[4] Lasson's edition, p. 700 f.

praise to that which he received in the early work of 1801–2.[1] Then he had been praised, and his methods had been applauded, because he advocated the necessary idea that the Italian people should be saved and united in one State. Now it was stated that the much more limited aim (which was purely one of State) of cleansing the Papal State from the weeds of independent dynasts, was a 'just right in the moral sense'. 'With a high sense of the necessity for forming a State, Machiavelli laid down the principles according to which States ought to be formed in those circumstances. The various rulers and ruling houses had to be altogether suppressed; and if (with our concept of liberty) we cannot accept the means, which he tells us are the only possible ones and are completely justified—if we cannot accept them, because they involve the most ruthless exercise of authority, and all kinds of deception, murder, etc.—then we must at least acknowledge that the dynasts, who had to be overthrown, could only be attacked in this manner, because a total lack of conscience and a complete depravity was altogether part of their being.' Thus Hegel distinguished between the kernel and the husk of Machiavelli's doctrines, and extended only a temporal and not an absolute sanction to his crude methods.

In our history of the idea of *raison d'état*, Machiavelli, Frederick the Great and Hegel stand out as the three most prominent figures. Hegel himself had a definite sense of this connection.[2] He did not indeed make use of the slogan of *raison d'état* (as we are obliged to do here) to denote the general substance of the principles of State conduct both inside and outside the State; on the contrary, he looked upon it as a concept which had first been formed by the Enlightenment (with its bias towards Natural Law), the 'principle of what was universally best', which was permitted within the State to set itself above private rights and to carry out the universal objects of the State. But it was precisely from this aspect that Frederick the Great seemed to him to be a 'world-historical person. One can call him the ruler who brought the new epoch to reality, wherein the actually-existent State interest attained to universality and its supreme authorization.' 'He must be singled out particularly, because he grasped intellectually the universal purpose of the State, and because he was the first ruler to cling fast to the universal element in the State, who always considered the ultimate good of his State as the final principle, and never allowed the particular element to have any influence, if it was opposed to the object of the State. He raised the idea to the throne, and gave it a validity in the face of anything that was particular or special.' Thus, with good justification, he looked upon Frederick as being the pioneer of his own idea of the State, as the man who ushered in the epoch in which Hegel expected this idea to triumph.

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 863 f.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 918 f.

But now what was the final purpose served by Hegel's *raison d'état* and his idea of the power-State? Hitherto we have heard that it was the progressive realization of the world-reason. But since this world-reason, because it had to embrace the entire spiritual and intellectual content of world-history, could not be expressed simply, one can quite understand that it is possible for there to be different interpretations of what Hegel looked upon as the supreme value of world history. The researcher who has investigated Hegel's idea of the power-State more thoroughly than anyone else hitherto came to the conclusion that for Hegel 'national power was the supreme aim', and that his world-spirit was nothing else but 'the expression for the moral authorization of nationalist world-power'.[1] In this one can only see an absolute debasement of the Hegelian doctrine of the power-State, converting a means into an end-in-itself. Certainly Hegel gave a wide scope both to *raison d'état* and the power-State, and looked upon the external power of a nation as the correlate of its inner vigour.[2] But the supreme result which he expected from its development was not national power in itself, but rather the national culture which was to proceed from it, not deliberately aimed at, but blossoming organically out of it. 'The supreme goal that a State can achieve, is that art and science should be developed in it, and a height attained which corresponds to the mind and spirit of the people. This is the highest purpose of the State, but it is a purpose which the State must not attempt to produce as a construction; on the contrary, it must create itself out of itself.' [3]

Nor can the crude aim of power be reconciled with Hegel's famous assertion that world-history is equivalent to progress in the consciousness of freedom. For him freedom was more than a mere development of State power; it was for him the unity of the mind and its innermost depths with its world. '*This is its supreme liberation*, because thought is its innermost essence.' [4] In the last resort, his philosophy of history culminated in a sublime contemplation, as being the supreme value which the human mind was capable of attaining.[5] Whoever completely comprehended the world and the reason manifest in it, that person was

[1] Heller, *loc. cit.*, p. 130.

[2] G. Lasson in the Introduction to Hegel's *Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, p. 79.

[3] *Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, edited by Lasson, p. 628; cf. also p. 871. The fact that culture serves the State is fully reconcilable with the Hegelian dialectic, indeed it is necessarily connected with it. In the *Rechtsphilosophie*, page 11 of the Preface, it says that 'philosophy is principally or solely in the service of the State'—and moreover that without the State culture itself would not be possible. Cf. Giese, *Hegels Staatsidee und die Idee der Staatserziehung*, Berlin Dissertation, 1923, pp. 134 ff.: 'For Hegel, art and science are not differentiated from the State; they are actually forces of the intellectual essence of the State, indeed in a certain way they are actually the State itself.'

[4] *Loc. cit.*, p. 160.

[5] Even Dilthey (*Ges. Schriften*, 4, 249) looks upon 'the return of the spirit to its absolute inwardness' as the 'final element' in Hegel.

free. But chiefly one had to comprehend the *coincidentia oppositorum*, of apparent contrasts between nature and mind, of the genuine unity and rationality of all Being and Becoming. 'If thought is free in itself, then it can afford to dismiss freely the aspect of appearance'; it can 'tolerate the fact that what is natural has directly formed in itself what is spiritual and intellectual'.[1] That is to say, convinced of the unity of mind and nature, it can tolerate the drama of this empirical world with all its frightful abysses, and can concede freedom to all the forces at work in it. This freedom granted to the 'Appearance' was indeed still only the apparent freedom of the marionettes. True freedom lay only in the almost mystical union between the observing and thinking mind and the world-spirit.

Thus Hegel showed genius in adopting a combination of ruthless realism in acknowledging reality, and a transcendent attitude to the whole of life from the highest metaphysical level. Thereby he seemed to accomplish the remarkable achievement of managing both to grant all the assertions of a pessimistic view (which doubted the goodness in the world) and yet simultaneously to oppose it with a transcendental optimism, which looked down on this world with a heroic superiority and calm. The filth of reality, which surrounded the philosopher, did not besmirch him. Rather, he gathered it all up with a playful hand, and made it into one of the bricks with which to build his palace. *Raison d'état* was also one of these bricks.

Hegel's system, simultaneously authoritative and profound, built up and executed as it was in a grandiose and abstruse manner, could not long maintain itself as a closed doctrine. But an enormous influence resulted from his idea of the cunning of reason, in allowing Good to emerge from Evil. The whole bulk of experience of life and history did in fact confirm that some sinister connection existed between Good and Evil. But Hegel's unfortunate influence on the ideas of German power politics arose from the fact that it was possible to forget the sinister element in this connection, and that a palliating light was capable of being shed also on the primitive, bestial and nocturnal aspect of *raison d'état*. The doctrine of reason's cunning was nothing else but the logical consequence of the philosophy of identity, which required this means in order to be able to present the unity and rationality of the whole world-nexus. 'For the rational mind, philosophy transfigures the element of actual reality which seems to be unjust.' [2] But this kind of theodicy and of universal optimism, with which the philosophy of identity learnt to look upon reality, had concealed in it the serious danger that moral feeling would become blunted and the excesses of power politics would be taken too lightly.

[1] *Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, p. 578.
[2] *Ibid.*, edited by G. Lasson, p. 55.

And this danger also lay concealed in the new doctrine of individuality. It was already capable of leading the morality of individual existence into temptation if the right of individuality to express itself was held to be limitless, and was set up as a higher type of morality in opposition to universal morality. Once applied to the supra-individual individuality of the State, it could be used to justify all its excesses of power-policy, as the unavoidable and organic outcome of its being. 'A State', Hegel remarked in his *Philosophy of Right* (§ 334), 'may regard its infinity and honour as at stake in each of its concerns, however minute, and it is all the more inclined to susceptibility to injury the more its strong individuality is impelled as a result of long domestic peace to seek and create a sphere of activity abroad.' Hegel was also, as one knows, very strongly under the influence of Napoleon, and rejected any moralizing in the face of the great conqueror-personalities of world history. Thereby he certainly paved the way for a freer and more open-minded interpretation of the personalities of world history, but also for a laxer treatment of the problem of political ethics. He did not take the trouble to limit in any way the completeness of the grandiose powers which he granted to the interest-policy of States in their dealings with one another—apart of course from those reservations he made against the uncleanliness of Machiavelli's methods, which he stated were only permissible in Machiavelli's contemporary historical situation, and were not to be considered permanent and universally applicable. This only offered a flimsy kind of barrier against the excesses of a modern Machiavellism, which in the future would also be capable of justifying itself with some new and special contemporary situation, when it made use of its new and frightful methods which were basically perhaps just as immoral.

Thus the idea of identity and the idea of individuality—these two supreme and fruitful ideas of the contemporary German mind—showed the inner tragic two-edged quality of all great historical ideas and forces.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FICHTE

NOW at last in Germany Machiavelli found men who understood him, or at least began to comprehend things from the starting-point of his historical and individual presuppositions. In 1795, before Hegel already, Herder had, in his *Letters for the furtherance of humanity* (5th collection, Nos. 58 and 59), shown his great sense of what was historically individual even with regard to Machiavelli and thus paved the way for a juster assessment of this much-misunderstood man, by drawing attention to the power of the opinions then dominant concerning the relationship between politics and morals, whose most important and clever representative Machiavelli in fact was. He also heavily emphasized Machiavelli's goal of the national liberation of Italy, and thus paved the way in general for the later interpretation of Ranke. But the historical justification of Machiavelli's personality which he undertook did not reach as far as justifying his doctrine. He praised Machiavelli, but execrated Machiavellism with which his ideal of humanity would have nothing to do. Oh, if only (he cried) this policy of *raison d'état*, of which Machiavelli was the master, 'could be forever buried for the human race!' By praising Machiavelli and his follower Naudé (whom he also re-discovered), he only wanted to show that, by 'gazing calmly into a dark abyss of history', he could discover something of value and be forced to recognize it even there, and that this was particularly possible if one was living in a better period. After such an enormous passage of time (he believed), even a Machiavelli would be bound to think differently today. 'Oh, if only we had a picture drawn by Machiavelli, of a ruler of our own times!' [1] Thus we see that even Herder had not yet attained the new, specifically German attitude to the problem of Machiavellism, which we first found in the case of Hegel.

[1] Fester, *Machiavelli*, p. 4, and Elkan, *Die Entdeckung Machiavellis in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert*, *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 119, 430 ff., in passages which refer to Herder's interpretation of Machiavelli, have failed to pay sufficient attention to this aspect of his judgment; Elkan indeed explains it quite wrongly when he says that Herder had a feeling that politics would have to apply certain fundamental principles

But certainly Fichte, who was the second of the great philosophers of identity who occupied himself with the problem in detail, did have this attitude. In 1807, the year of German misfortune, while he was staying in Königsberg, he published an article in the review *Vesta* which came out there, under the euphemistic title of 'Concerning Machiavelli as a writer, and passages from his works'; this article was a political sermon to his countrymen, which advocated the basic ideas of Machiavellian *raison d'état* and power-policy with all his characteristic impetuous force and lack of qualification.[1] He summarized it in two propositions:

'1. Your neighbour, even though he may look upon you as his natural ally against another power which is feared by you both, is always ready, at the first opportunity, as soon as it can be done with safety, to better himself at your expense. He is forced to do it, if he is wise; and could not hold back, even if he were your brother.

'2. It is altogether insufficient for you to defend your own territory; on the contrary, you must keep your gaze fixed dispassionately on everything which could influence your situation, and you must in no way tolerate that anything inside these boundaries of your influence should be altered to your detriment, and never hesitate a moment, if you can alter something there to your advantage. For you can rest assured that the other will do the same, whenever he can; and if you delay in doing it now on your side, then you will get behind him. Whoever fails to increase his power, must decrease it, if others increase theirs.'

Fichte also attempted to understand Machiavelli from a contemporary and psychological point of view. He thought of him as a man who was carved out of the same wood as himself, but had lived in a dark and heathen period, in a merely sensuous world. So he recognized him as 'a mind that was really metaphysical in origin, but had never

which corresponded to those of the *Principe*. But his essay deals in a very adequate manner with the smaller minds, such as Luden, etc., who shared in the rehabilitation of Machiavelli at that time. In *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, I believe I have sufficiently demonstrated how the Romantics approached the problem of power politics, and especially how Adam Müller's doctrine offers a first stage towards Ranke. It is notable that even Goethe in the last year of his life, from an old sympathy towards the cabinet-politics of the *ancien régime*, recognized the obligatory character of *raison d'état*. 'I place myself', he said on 1st Jan. 1832, 'higher than the ordinary flat moral politicians: I say quite bluntly that no king ever keeps his word, nor can he ever keep it, he must always yield to the dominating power of circumstances; the Poles would have perished in any case, they were bound to perish on account of their whole confused way of thinking; was Prussia to emerge with empty hands, whilst Russia and Austria seized what they could? For us poor philistines the opposite course of action is a duty, not for the powerful ones of the earth.' *Goethes Unterhaltungen mit dem Kanzler F. v. Müller*, 3rd ed., p. 191. Cf. also E. Marcks, *Goethe und Bismarck* (*Männer und Zeiten*, vol. 2).

[1] Reprinted in *Nachgelassene Werke*, 3, 401 ff. Critical edition by Hans Schulz, 1918.

been able to see clearly his own primary source'. He said other beautiful and profound things about Machiavelli's Promethean attitude and modern heathenism. But it was not a taste for history or any joy in the individual that drew him to Machiavelli; rather he was attempting (and in view of his whole philosophy it could hardly be otherwise) to find in him an absolute and timelessly valid truth, which would serve as a beneficial remedy for his own sick period. For none of the other great German philosophers of identity went so far as Fichte in his bold attempts to blend mind and nature, reason and reality, into a unity, or place them so directly and passionately at the service of reality, or of the ethical and intellectual permeation of his own time and his contemporaries. It was not in contemplative mysticism that his doctrine culminated, as in the case of Hegel and Schelling, but rather in doing and action, in a deliberate refashioning of the whole of life according to the ideal of reason, in a practical victory for autonomous morality over all sensuous impulses, in the establishing of a realm 'such as had never yet been seen on earth'. And in the service of this sublime task, which went far beyond all the power-struggles of States and beyond all *raison d'état*, Fichte now also placed these doctrines of naked *raison d'état* drawn from Machiavelli—one of the most remarkable and spiritually moving events in the whole history of *raison d'état*. If we can succeed in some measure in explaining the inner contradiction between ends and means which arises here, then we shall also shed new light on the alliance, which was now made in Germany, between Idealism and Machiavellism.

Elsewhere, in *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, we have tried to give such an explanation; and, although it stood in the context of the pre-war period, we may stand fast by it even today when times have changed, and only wish to supplement it here from the point of view of the present analysis. Fichte was not able (as Hegel was) to make this alliance permanent; he only concluded the alliance in a transitory fashion. Machiavellism and the *raison d'état* of the power-State did fit in, both necessarily and organically, with the basic ideas of the Hegelian philosophy. Hegel's objective Idealism, which started from the assumption that the whole world was permeated by God, was capable of assimilating them without difficulty into the world-process, which received them as it were elastically. But for Fichte's subjective Idealism, which subordinated the world to the free moral personality, and expected everything from the acts of the latter, Machiavellism would always have been indigestible, if it had not been for the prodigious experiences and requirements of the time, which had altogether forcibly altered it; and if it had not been that, since the beginning of the century, certain changes in the direction of objective Idealism had taken place in his philosophy, under the influence of the Romantic movement and of the

other contemporary thinkers. The contemporary event which influenced him was the sight of the Prussian collapse—as a consequence (it seemed to him) of an effeminate, frightened policy, which wished to avoid war, and its conflict with the iron logic of power. He had already known for a long time that, in relation to each other, States lived under a state of nature and according to the right of the stronger; but hitherto he had only considered it an irrationality. Now, in the face of the disturbing success of Napoleon, he began to see the rational expediency and consistency of a superior power-policy. At the same time he also saw that such a power-policy could only be beaten with its own weapons. But in the process he never for a moment wavered in his ideal of the rational State which ought to be founded on human rights, freedom and original uniformity. Those, he explained, were 'the eternal and indestructible foundations of all social order, which it was absolutely impermissible for any State to repudiate'. But he added (constrained by the experience of superior power that he had recently undergone) that it was not possible to establish or administer any State by means of this alone. The most elemental feelings now rose up in him, feelings of national pride, an impulse towards freedom, and resistance against the bondage of Napoleon. It was to produce weapons with which to fight him, that was the real purpose of his essay on Machiavelli; just as he also had recourse then to Machiavelli's prescriptions for military science, and poured scorn on any feeling of anxiety in the face of superior artillery as 'extraordinary limitations in modern thought and courage'. But the principal reason why Germans ought now to learn Machiavelli's *raison d'état*, was in order to win back their liberty in the future.

The great problem which faced the German thinker was how to bring the actually existent State into harmony with the best State. And this problem he solved briefly and decisively, by welding together the real State and the best State in the white heat of love of the Fatherland; and he conferred on the incipient 'empire' of reason the right, in its relations with other States, to employ the ruthless egotistical combative measures of the real State—similar to the way in which Campanella gave himself the right to realize his Sun-State by the methods of *raison d'état*. It was more a hasty solution, achieved by wishful thinking, than an intellectual solution of the problem. But he also attempted to give an intellectual solution 'from the standpoint of reason', which harmonized remarkably well with Frederick the Great's doctrine in the *Avant-propos* to the *Histoire de mon temps*, and may quite possibly have been influenced by it. For, in exactly the same way as Frederick, he distinguished between the universal moral law which was valid without exception for all private life, and the moral duty of the ruler to live for the welfare of his people, and consequently also to go somewhat beyond the commands of personal morality. It was Fichte's opinion that the ruler would thereby

be raised to a 'higher moral order', and in asserting this Fichte was already bordering on Hegel's doctrine of the higher morality of the State.

And this was not the only one of Fichte's ideas that echoed the Hegelian solution of the problem. It was principally the new sense, that was now spreading in Germany, for what was individual, to which Fichte also yielded (though he did not allow himself to be taken hold of by it completely).[1] So it came about that from now on, from the stony ground of his rationalism, there occasionally burst forth, like magic flowers, certain individualizing perceptions, suddenly and almost without any intermediate stage. It was the sense for what was individual (as we have already seen) that enabled him to understand the personality of Machiavelli, without which he would perhaps never have been enabled to understand Machiavellism. But along with the sense for what was individual, there also grew up in him a new relation to the historical world. From all points of view it is instructive to compare his youthful work of 1793, the *Attempt to rectify the opinion of the public concerning the French Revolution* with the lectures on *Characteristics of the present age*, which he delivered in 1804–5 in Berlin. In 1793 the historical world seemed to be a disintegrated (or at least only partly and embryonically integrated) mass of base matter. He was not interested in its progress; the philosopher had only to show with its help, that all paths had been tried and none led to the goal. Reason and historical reality stood rigidly apart from each other, in enmity and opposition. The irrational phenomena of history he thrust away from him, scorned them and asserted that Reason must necessarily strive to overcome them. In the *Characteristics* of 1804–5, on the other hand, the course of history and the irrational element of appearance in it were assessed as being part of the plan of Providence, as being a necessary stage towards the ultimate realm of Reason. From this teleological interpretation, which united his fundamental tendency towards rationalism with the new individualizing sense, there now sprang (just as in the case of Hegel) a whole series of properly historical perceptions; and particularly in the *Characteristics* the power politics of the European community of States, the tension between the natural striving of the more powerful States for universal monarchy and the equally natural striving of the less powerful States towards uniformity, was treated with insight and almost with sympathy. 'That is the natural and necessary process, one may acknowledge it, one may even know it absolutely, or not'.[2] At the same time, he was certainly also lifting his eyes from the real State towards the best State; and he looked upon the goal of mere self-preservation for the modern State, supported as it was by the whole strength of the nation,

[1] Regarding the limitations of his sense for the individual element, cf. Wallner, *Fichte als polit. Denker*, 1926, p. 182.

[2] *Werke*, 7, 203.

as being 'a narrow-minded aim, only forced upon it by the contemporary situation'. For in the end eternal peace would be bound to arrive, and then the State would put to better purposes the national strength it had come to possess. But in the *Characteristics*, power-policy had already been recognized without qualification as a means to the end of culture. 'In this age, the most cultured State in the European commonwealth of nations is without exception the one that strives the hardest . . . and this striving would be all the more advantageous for culture, the less such a State was favoured by fortune, and the less therefore it needed and continued to need inner strengthening and application of strength.' [1]

How much all these ideas remind one now of the Hegelian doctrine of the cunning of Reason, which causes all the impulses and passions of the sensuous world to work unconsciously for its own higher aims. Fichte had already directly professed this doctrine by saying that the State, so long as the age of rational politics has not yet dawned, promotes the purposes of Reason 'continually and without its own knowledge or conscious volition—driven on by the natural law of the development of our species, and while having in view a completely different purpose'.[2] It was impossible to reach the longed-for identity between Reason and reality by means of any other doctrines save this one, which was advocated quite independently by Fichte and Hegel. Fichte indeed interpreted this identity quite differently from Hegel, and never allowed Reason to be consumed so completely in the process of world history as the latter did; on the contrary, he gave it an absolute rank and content freed from all temporal content. For Hegel the identity between Reason and reality was a fact; for Fichte it was a task. For Hegel the realm of Reason was already a matter of history; for Fichte it would only come *after* history, when history had completed the process that paved the way for it. This is the deeper reason why Fichte was not capable of holding fast to his recognition of Machiavellism. In his *Speeches to the German Nation* he let it drop (as we showed in our earlier book), and came back to condemning power-policy on principle. In his *Rechtslehre* of 1812 he once again declared that federation was indeed the aim of development, but that a forceful realistic policy on the part of the States, carried out to the last drop of blood, must be the means, as a necessary stage towards the goal.[3] But it no longer had any place in the realm of Reason which he saw coming and wanted to prepare for. The whole fearfully constricted and often desperate situation of the German people in Europe bred a constant tendency towards creating an alliance between German Idealism (which had begun with the proclamation of the Categorical Imperative) and Machiavellism.

[1] *Werke*, 7, 210 f. [2] *Ibid.*, 7, 161.
[3] N. Wallner, *Fichte als polit. Denker*, pp. 236 f. and 276.

The nationalization of the States, the new idea of the national State (which was at that time being almost forced on the Germans by necessity), actually gave a new meaning and content to the old pleonexia of the State. It ennobled it and made it more moral (as we previously expressed it).[1] But it was possible in the future (we must now add) for this civilizing process and improvement in morals to lead to a new immorality, when the national idea burst its banks and deteriorated into modern nationalism.

[1] *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, 7th ed., p. 105.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

RANKE

OF the two great ideas, which we have noticed in the new German spirit, the idea of identity and the idea of individuality, it was in the long run the latter that proved more powerful and fruitful. The systems of identity that desired to blend together mind and nature, reason and reality, in a profound unity and harmony which were either real or capable of being made real, collapsed because the underlying construction showed itself too weak in the face of the unavoidable facts of experience and history. But all these facts (which were raised by the nineteenth-century impulse towards empirical investigation to an unlooked-for height of fullness and significance) confirmed more and more the new discovery that the historical world was an abyss of individuality. The historical empiricism of the nineteenth century was thereby essentially distinguished from all the empirical onsets of earlier centuries, in that it accustomed itself ever more constantly to look upon the facts as an expression of definite spiritual and intellectual entities; and also in that it looked for the intellectual bond that held them together, not merely in the universal causal nexus and a few universal laws of Reason, but in the individually different laws of life and vital tendencies, which were immeasurably rich. Once the gaze was sharpened to detect the presence of such vital tendencies among the most visible appearances of the historical foreground, then it became possible to discern or to surmise, as it were behind the visible star-filled sky, new unknown worlds of stars, all of which were also following their own paths.

But what was it that held together this infinity of mental worlds and heavenly bodies? This new principle of individuality, spreading further and further, advancing from one discovery to another, uncovering individual rights and individual activities everywhere, threatened finally to terminate in a form of relativism, which no longer recognized anything fixed or absolute in history, but instead granted tolerantly and indulgently to every intellectual entity, to every individual vital tendency, its own free scope; this relativism would comprehend everything,

excuse everything, but would in the end also leave everything in an 'anarchy of values' (as old Dilthey expressed it). This was the danger of the later historicism in Germany, though it did not yet attack the earlier form. For the earlier form was still under the influence, not only of the German philosophy of identity, but also of the idea of Natural Law (which, though essentially vanquished, still had certain after-effects); and these two influences, though in different ways, had satisfied the profound human need for absolute values, for some sort of clasps that would hold together the life which otherwise would fly apart. Nor must we forget (indeed we must give it great prominence here) the influence of Christianity which, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, in both the Protestant and Catholic camps, became filled with a new and warm vital content, and offered a fixed hold to which certain great and important circles in Germany were able to cling. Against the flood of historicizing thought, which was now spreading in Germany, it raised up a dam; this dam was itself washed away in many places by the force of critical historical analysis, but it was always being built up again by ineradicable spiritual needs.

This is demonstrated in a striking manner by Leopold Ranke, who showed the greatest genius in realizing all the possibilities which were offered to thought by historicism and the principle of individuality. 'Pay great attention', he says in his *Political Discourse* of 1836, 'to the full significance of these entities! So many separate earthly and intellectual communities, evoked by genius and moral energy, comprehended in continuous development, advancing towards the Ideal by an inner impulse amid the confusions of this world, each in its own way. Examine them closely, these heavenly bodies, in their paths, their alternation, their system!' Thus he looked upon world history and its process as the supreme, all-inclusive entity and individuality, and thus too considered the States principally as 'individualities, each analogous to the others, but essentially independent of the others. . . . original creations of the human mind—one might even say, ideas of God'.[1] This already reveals the religious basis of his historicism, which is at the same time both enthusiastic and critical. In history, God Himself stood out for him like 'a holy hieroglyph, apprehended and preserved in its external form';[2] and for him it was a divine service to reveal this holy hieroglyph by means of his historical investigation. But, let it be noted, God was only 'apprehended in His external form', in his manifestation through history, and not in His unanalysable Being itself. God and God's ideas, divine reason—in his opinion, these were certainly in history; as far as this he was in agreement with the systems of identity, and (as they had already begun to do, only realistically and less violently) he was also able to give meaning and significance to masses of irrational constitu-

[1] *Sämtl. Werke*, 49/50, pp. 329 and 339. [2] *Ibid.*, 53/54, 90.

ents in the course of history. But for him God also existed above and beyond history, as the old personal God of Christianity, to whom as an old man he was still able to address the prayer: 'Omnipotent, Indivisible and Tri-une, Thou hast called me up out of nothing. Here I lie before the steps of Thy throne!' [1] It was thus in Panentheism, and not in Pantheism, that he finished up. He did occasionally strike a pantheistic note, and then the pantheistic temptations, which were bound to be awakened by a glance into the historical world's wealth of individuality, made themselves gently felt in him. But with a remarkable combination of religious reverence and critical caution, a combination of metaphysical and empirical motives, he shrank from following in Hegel's footsteps, by introducing God completely into history and raising humanity to a God in the process of becoming. If he had done this, he would never have acquired the broad-minded impartiality with respect to historical phenomena, on which the permanence and solidity of his investigations and his scientific greatness as a whole was so essentially founded. He was able to let things influence him more purely, and was much better able to show 'how it really happened', if he retained a consciousness of the distance between God and empirical history. His belief in a personal God came to the assistance of his scientific attitude. It was necessary, however, for this belief to keep itself free from attempts on the part of the theistic interpretation of history to see the hand of God in destiny everywhere. '*Occasionally* the hand of God is over them,' was his modest admission.[2] Even in cases where he thought he could perceive this influence directly, he made it perfectly clear that it was a question of belief and premonition only, and not of knowledge and scientific explanation. So his concept of God was enclosed by a very fine and subtle line. The concept was embracing enough in a strong, positive and fervent manner to be able to shed a radiance even on empirical history and to endow with a priestly sense those who investigated it; but at the same time it was also prudently adjusted to the need for carrying out an analysis that was completely free and not tied by any dogma or theory. The free movement of individual historical forces, which were 'just as good or as evil, as noble-minded or as animal, as cultured or as crude, aiming at eternity or subordinated to the moment' as their protagonists happened to be, now came into its full rights, but did not lose itself in an anarchy of values, because projected into it there was a great and absolute value which dominated and supported everything. Thus Ranke remained protected from the relativism to which this principle of individuality might have led. But it follows from this that a dualism which was logically irreconcilable was now capable of entering into his mode of viewing history and into his standards of value. It was certainly permissible that everything

[1] *Werke*, 53/54, 655. [2] *Ibid.*, 33/34, viii.

which happened in history should be interpreted freely and without presupposition as being the work of individual forces and circumstances; but it was not the case that everything could be granted and forgiven to it, because in the background there was present an absolute court of justice which did not allow contempt. But these moral judgments, which as one knows Ranke let fall (they were restrained, but nevertheless quite perceptible), occurred now from time to time, in a somewhat abrupt way, like propositions from another higher order of being, in his absorbing and forceful description of the flux of things; in this flux each individuality, be it good or evil, battled for its own right and its existence.

These are the presuppositions which determined Ranke's attitude towards Machiavelli, towards the problem of Machiavellism and the idea of *raison d'état*. Right at the beginning of his career of research, in his epoch-making book *Towards a Critique of Recent Historians* (1824), he came to discuss Machiavelli and Machiavellism. It is one of the most intelligent and fruitful estimates of Machiavelli that has ever been written, and it broke new ground for all those who followed him. Fifty years later, he supplemented it with additions which throw a particular light on the principles of his attitude towards Machiavelli, whereas the first edition was carried out purely from a historical point of view, and only hinted lightly at a moral judgment.[1] But, through this more precise working-out of the moral standpoint, a remarkable ambiguity entered into the interpretation which one can only understand if one perceives that Ranke fell into a conflict here between his historical genius and his moral conscience. His historical genius was capable of comprehending the case of Machiavelli and his precepts with the greatest skill in historical individualization. In his presentation, one can see how the work on the Prince grew formally with an organic necessity out of the individual mind of Machiavelli and out of the special situation in which and for which he was writing. 'The circumstances were such, and men seemed to the author to be of such a kind, that only evil paths could lead to the goal.' He succeeds in a striking manner in making it completely and historically intelligible how 'an author of the highest merit, and who was in no sense an evil man' was capable of maintaining an attitude of indifference with respect to Good and Evil —that is to say, by being prepared, when his Fatherland was in a desperate condition, 'to be bold enough to prescribe poison for it'.

[1] Only once (*Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber*, 1824, p. 199) does he speak of the 'frightfulness' of Machiavelli's doctrine. As against this, compare the characteristic conclusion of the first edition: 'In order to make certain principles thoroughly hateful to law-abiding citizens, one calls them even today by his name. *But now at last it is possible to be just.* He sought the salvation of Italy; but the condition of Italy seemed to him so desperate, that he was bold enough to prescribe a poison for it.'

But his interpretation remained incomplete by reason of the fact that he restricted the content and significance of the book purely to the individual man and to the individual moment that gave rise to it. He thus believed that he could reject the interpretation which looked upon Machiavelli's doctrines as being universal, 'whereas they were merely', as he said, 'instructions laid down for a definite purpose'. This they certainly were with respect to their origin and their direct intention, but not with respect to their inner factual content. As we have shown, this factual content grew to extend far beyond the momentary purpose, and presented the readers (whether they came to the book in a historical or an unhistorical mood) with the universal problem of *raison d'état* and particularly with the element of constraint, of necessity, in State conduct. Altogether it was not so wrong of the historically unschooled readers of earlier centuries to ascribe this kind of universal meaning and content to the doctrines of Machiavelli.

Ranke was horrified by the idea that Machiavelli's precepts should have consequences that were applicable universally and for all time. 'It is frightful to think that the principles, which he considered necessary for acquiring and maintaining the authority of a usurper, could also find application in a peaceful and law-abiding kingdom.' He cited the case of King Frederick II's *Antimachiavell*, to show that an established hereditary monarchy could certainly consider 'making use of the ideas on which the universal world-order was founded'; he overlooked the fact that Frederick II, in particular, adopted a completely dualistic attitude towards Machiavellism. The important point therefore is, that Ranke, on resuming his early work, felt himself obliged to supplement his explanation of Machiavelli (which was originally purely historical) with the confession that he wished in the process to cling fast 'to the eternal laws of the moral order of the world' and was 'very far from following Machiavelli, or indeed even of excusing him'. But, if these eternal laws were to be applied with complete strictness, should he not really have blamed him? He even avoided doing this, because it would have brought him into open conflict with his own historical understanding. So this conflict, which was still there nevertheless, was veiled by the elastic skill of his linguistic medium. For he had an overpowering and involuntary need not to lose sight of the eternal guiding lights in the impetuous flux of historical life. 'Although', he says in the same essay, 'important minds have rejected it, one must still maintain, above everything else, that Justice, quite as much as Truth, Beauty and Goodness, forms an ideal of human life.' This admission, that besides the changeable element in human life, there also existed an unchangeable element, was one which he made repeatedly. 'The historian', he says in the Introduction to the Berchtesgaden Lectures, 'must always have one thing in view, and that is how men thought and lived in a certain

period; then he finds that, apart from certain principal ideas *which are definite and unchangeable* (e.g. the moral idea), each epoch has its own special tendency and its own particular ideal.' In his History of France, he says in reference to the murder of the Duke of Guise in 1563: [1] 'The principles of morality, which underlie all civilization and the whole human community, retreated before the religious idea.' But what was the historian to say if a conflict arose between the changeable element and the unchangeable, between politics and morals? Once, in a letter of 26th November 1859 to King Max of Bavaria,[2] Ranke expressed the purely moral point of view with extraordinary acuteness. 'I consider it an extremely dangerous principle that, for the sake of performing his task in world history, anyone should consider himself justified in committing injustice to another. This is as much as to say: "The end justifies the means; everything is permissible *in majorem dei gloriam*." ' But he knew only too well that this dangerous principle was being applied again and again in world history, and that sins were incorporated in the foundations of many a great and valuable achievement. The great realistic politicians of recent centuries who acted in a Machiavellian manner are precisely the ones who (more than any other type of historical character) often incited Ranke's skill and power of reproduction to its supreme and most intensive, and certainly to its most impressive achievements. He depicted them (if one may recall the words used of King Henry VIII) with a mixture of admiration and abhorrence. But generally the admiration outshines the abhorrence, and the reflective reader breathes an atmosphere of fateful inevitability. 'The conduct of Francis I', he says, for example, 'was extremely detestable; the most Christian kingdom (as it was originally thought to be) could not in the process continue to exist. But for the sake of the formation of the State (a task with which the centuries had since been busy) it was . . . of undeniable advantage. . . . This act of wrenching oneself free from the idea of universal Christendom, was an indispensable step towards the development of a new form of the State, both without and within.' [3]

Motives of a contemptible kind, it says in one passage in *Wallenstein*, frequently operate towards a great purpose. It was this insight that caused Hegel to develop his doctrine of the cunning of Reason, and then use it to found his transcendental optimism which could tolerate the sinful origin of the great cultural organism. At this point, however, there came a decisive separation between the paths taken by Hegel and

[1] *Werke*, 8, 186; also the passages quoted by M. Ritter, *Entwicklung d. Geschichtswissenschaft*, p. 366.

[2] *Werke*, 53/54, p. 405. Cf. also the closing words of the Berchtesgaden Lectures (*Epochen*, p. 233): 'Whereas Machiavelli incited a ruler to ruthlessness, my endeavour is much rather to support Your Majesty in your virtues.'

[3] *Werke*, 8, 84 f.

Ranke. 'The doctrine', Ranke observed,[1] 'whereby the world-spirit produces events as it were by deception, and makes use of human passions to achieve its aims, is founded on a supremely unworthy conception of God and humanity.' This verdict shows how firmly rooted the feeling for 'the eternal laws of the moral world-order' was in Ranke's soul. If he had abandoned himself exclusively to his historical insight and experience, then he could have been sorely tempted by the loophole which Hegel had found, for harmonizing the inevitable mire of history with its ultimate idealistic purpose. For this insight was constantly leading him back with a magnetic power of attraction to the facts from which Hegel had acquired his doctrine. So one sees here particularly clearly the dualism in Ranke's historical thought between the two standards of the changeable and the unchangeable.

If he had become fully conscious of this dualism and thought it out completely, he would have finally reached a tragic pessimism, as Jacob Burckhardt did later. The maxim which he impressed on the King of Bavaria, and the facts of history which, as a historian, it was his business to discern and communicate—these two aspects yawned apart, and this irreconcilable division could only be filled in with pain. And yet Ranke's total conception of history had a kind of optimism, which cast a much brighter, milder and more favourable light on history than Hegel's did. What was this based on, and why was the light it shed more bright and convincing than Hegel's? The latter had succeeded in reaching it by the path of rational abstractions, which, with increasing boldness, attempted to derive the actual as well as the mental phenomena of the world from one single supreme idea. But this meant that individual life became a mere shadow play. Ranke, on the other hand, accomplished the decisive act in the development of German historical thought. He broke with all the methods of rationalization and abstraction, of deriving things from ideas that could be comprehended abstractly; and in order to do this he blended things and ideas together into a unity of 'the living'—a development for which the Romantic movement, Schelling and Wilhelm von Humboldt had already paved the way. 'The real ideal,' it says in his *Political Discourse* (p. 325), 'which suddenly stands out before one's gaze in all its unlooked-for originality, cannot be derived from any higher principle.' [2] Individual life in history, incapable of being derived from universal ideas, but imbued with special ideas by which it is shaped, so that in the process idea and body, soul and flesh, become essentially one, and the whole enwreathed in the breath of original divine creativity—this was the particular synthesis of the ideas of

[1] *Epochen*, p. 7.

[2] 'The most radical formulation of historism that I know,' as Rothacker said (*Savigny, Grimm, Ranke, Histor. Zeitschr.*, 128, 437) in drawing attention to the great importance of this remark for the history of thought.

individuality and identity which Ranke was able to provide. Thus even his philosophy of history was a kind of philosophy of identity, and was secretly nourished by the impulse of the German spirit towards contemplation of the divine Nature. He only denied (as we have seen) that God was identical with divine Nature. But divine Nature in the historical world, a reflection of God and indivisibly one in itself, was contemplated by him with faith and a feeling of happiness. It could not be bad; indeed it could not even waver ambiguously between being bad and good. At the end of his life, at the time of the social unrest and the attempted *coup d'état* of 1878, he wrote in his journal: 'It has always been our experience that even absurdity, immorality and violence have a purpose. Ormuzd and Ahriman are always in conflict. Ahriman works continually to destroy the world, but he never succeeds. These are the thoughts of an old man.' [1] A consistent dualism was the outcome, if one looked upon the conflict between Ormuzd and Ahriman as uncertain. But Ranke's dualism (as we have already pointed out) did not happen to be consistent. He was restricted by the need for identity, just as this in turn was restricted by the dualistic distinction between the actual and spiritual divine Nature and the purely spiritual Godhead.

In this manner it is possible to explain the optimistic (not to say, sunny) interpretation of the problem of power and the abysses of *raison d'état* which is present all through his historical descriptions. In struggles for power he saw (and in this he was again very close to Hegel) the motive force that was constantly creating new, individual and valuable life in history. In his *History of the World* he says: [2] 'This allows one to see the central idea in the history of the human race; namely, that in the conflicts which occur between the opposing interests of States and nations, more and more potent forces are constantly arising, which cause the universal element to be altered and adapted, and are repeatedly giving it a new character.' Shall we recall too the famous ideas (which have so often been discussed) from the end of the essay on the *Great Powers*? 'World history does not really present such a haphazard confusion of conflict, such a process of mutual attack, and continuous succession of States and peoples, as it appears to do at first sight. . . . There are forces, there are indeed creative spiritual forces, productive of life, there is life itself, there are moral energies, all of which we can see at work in its development.' In order to be able to say this, Ranke must certainly here (as in the innumerable other instances where he extolled 'moral energy' as the vital source of power-policy) have been interpreting the concept of morality in a much wider sense than in that of the customary unalterable moral command dictated by conscience, which he himself (as we have seen) applied in another context. In fact

[1] *Werke*, 53/54, 627.

[2] Vol. 3, Introduction.

Ranke, in an important entry in his journal during his middle years, even made it explicit that 'moral feelings are not solely the concern of the conscience', that the moral element tends to intermingle (this is how we interpret the passage) with the intellectual element. Perhaps, in the last resort, he even assumed an identity between the moral and spiritual elements [1]—and this again was one of the points in which he agreed with Hegel and his doctrine that there was a superior type of ethics, to be distinguished from ordinary morality. But whereas Hegel thought and proceeded in an abstract way in this matter, Ranke, when he extended the boundaries of morality, fixed his gaze entirely on the 'living element', on the unified element of what was 'actual and spiritual', creative and original, which he revered as being the source of all historical life. Imbued with this, Ranke was capable (in his *Political Discourse*) of venturing the following proposition, touching on the obscure riddle of the course of history: 'There are few important wars you can name to me of which it could not be said that the victory was gained by true moral energy.'

State, power, moral energy, intellectual life—they all seem, as he lets them influence one another and even intermingle, like the variously situated but inter-connected basins of a unified system of lakes, through the whole of which there passes the same vital stream. 'Between State and power in themselves', he once observed,[2] 'there is perhaps no difference; for the idea of a State originates in the idea of a certain independence, which cannot be maintained without the corresponding power.' But Ranke always saw political power (and herein lies the most intimate attraction of his political descriptions of history) as containing pre-eminently something spiritual.[3] Not only because it is produced by moral energy, but also because it can only endure by means of spiritual, and not solely physical means. Ranke also already knew something that the modern sociologists like to demonstrate to themselves only by means of a painful analysis; namely, that authority, which is part of the essence of real power and constrains men to obedience, is based on their moral feelings. 'Therein consists too the mystery of power; it will not succeed in making use of its total resources, until all forces *freely* obey the command.' [4]

On account of these moral and spiritual forces which established themselves in State-egoism, *raison d'état* now also attained the dignity of a great moral power. With real approval, Ranke now saw in it the

[1] See *Werke*, 53/54, 571. I am assuming that in the sentence in the note, 'this gives rise to the idealism of the moral and the spiritual', *idealism* should read *identity*, since this is what the logical connection leads one to expect.

[2] *Preussische Geschichte*, *Werke*, 27/28, 4.

[3] 'In power itself, there appears a spiritual entity, an original spirit, which has its own life,' etc., *Epochen*, p. xi.

[4] *Reformationsgeschichte*, *Werke*, 1, 311.

most powerful motive impulse in recent history: 'Of all the ideas, which have contributed towards the development of modern Europe, the most effective perhaps is the idea of a completely independent State authority, not tied by any foreign considerations, and only founded on itself . . . It is understandable, however, that one was still a long way from attaining this aim, when the State was hampered in its movements, its alliances and its whole political and military activity by political considerations, which did not arise in itself.' [1] Again and again, with the variety and flexibility of his language, which did not allow any feeling of lassitude, but on the contrary traced everything back to the sources of life, he revealed in his accounts the inner necessity of this process and the violent force of State interest and of the need for State power. The numerous instances presented in his work, in which treaties were broken on account of *raison d'état*, were treated by him with an elastic dialectic; this dialectic, although it clearly expressed the moral judgment of the world on the subject [2] and also posed the deeper question of the personal moral responsibility of the agent, did generally allot the principal importance to the constraining, or at least explanatory authority of circumstances and power-impulses. 'For, in the storms of world history, it is impossible to give much importance to words and promises, however good they sound; the great forces are driven ahead by their own impulse, until they come up against some obstacle.' [3] This is the old story of 'power, which, once established, must continue constantly to grow, because it cannot estimate the enmity opposed to it'.[4]

But why does this old story, which Machiavelli and Boccalini used to tell before, sound like a new story now when Ranke tells it? Where is the progress made in it by the doctrine of *raison d'état* and State interest? This follows already from everything we have said in the last two chapters on the subject of the intellectual revolution which occurred through the discovery of the principle of individuality. The very meaningful analysis which the young Ranke made of Machiavelli's mentality may make this clear once again: 'Instead of the life, which proceeds from an original tendency, from an inner movement, he wants cunning, circumspection, opportunism and moreover bravery.' [5] That was not only true of Machiavelli but also of the predominant mode of thought in earlier centuries in general. The thought influenced by Natural Law (as we said earlier) arose from the needs of the individual man, which

[1] *Reformationsgeschichte*, *Werke*, 4, 27.

[2] Compare especially what he says about Frederick the Great's conflict between politics and morals, *Werke*, 27/28, 480: 'It is not always possible to win the approval of one's contemporaries or of posterity, or to convince the judgment of the world; *but the hero must at least be justified to himself.*'

[3] *Preussische Geschichte*, *Werke*, 27/28, 478.

[4] *Weltgeschichte*[4], 1, 178. [5] *Werke*, 33/34, p. * 157; edition of 1824, p. 190.

needs were then projected into the world and into life. Thus the individual—acting consciously, rationally and expediently—stood at the centre of all life. It was possible to argue about what was rational; and so Machiavellism was valid as a practical mode of conduct adopted by statesmen acting in a conscious and expedient manner. One could either blame them or approve them, according as one considered the universal moral law to permit exceptions or not. But the new historicism no longer started out from the isolated individual, but rather from the comprehensive view of a type of life which revealed itself in individual forms that were continually new and hence also in the separate individual; but it was always blending together all the baser individualities into higher spiritual entities, and thus finally conceived itself, the universal life-stream of history, as a supreme comprehensive individuality. *Raison d'état* was then nothing else but the individual idea of the State which dominated the individuality of the single statesman. 'The idea has a practical life in true statesmen: it is the rule of their conduct. The spiritual existence of the State is concentrated in their thought, in their mind.' [1] But the 'universal element', of which Ranke often speaks, does not merely signify (in the old rationalist sense of Natural Law) some kind of abstract ideas and principles, but rather something quite concrete and living, namely the even higher and more forceful individualities of history as opposed to the lower types.[2] Thus, in his preface to the book on Hardenberg, Ranke could say that the universal movement was the really vital element in history, and that the statesman only had true significance in so far as he promoted and perhaps guided it. State interests were then nothing else but the forces of this universal life, closely interwoven with it and issuing in the conduct of the individual statesman, who can only operate truly by recognizing these interests and following them: *Fert unda nec regitur*. Now for the first time, owing to the discovery of this universal connection in life, a more profound philosophical and historical importance could be given to the doctrine of *ragione di stato* and to Rohan's remark that, though rulers might command nations, it was interest that commanded the rulers. The universal life-stream of history now first appears in its full force, each separate wave in it, however, being revealed simultaneously in its individual clarity and inevitability; it was 'not free choice, but rather the necessity of things' that was dominant in the activity of States.[3]

[1] *Reflexionen, Werke*, 49/50, 246.

[2] This already becomes clear from a close analysis of *Die Grossen Mächte*. Also *Werke*, 7, 104: 'The universal, which does not indeed proceed from what is particular and manifold, but rather is itself something particular, which comprehends the elements within itself.'

[3] *Preuss. Geschichte, Werke*, 29, 224.

Hence arose Ranke's heuristic principle (which was so very fruitful in general) of investigating, always and everywhere, those motives in the statesman's conduct, which sprang from the pressure of the universal state of affairs, and of setting aside the trivial (and yet so ineradicable and very human) habit of dwelling on personal errors and weaknesses. 'My distinguished friend,' Edwin von Manteuffel once wrote to him, 'you do not believe in hastiness on the part of important men.' [1] 'I do not know', it says in the book on Hardenberg, where he is judging the Prussian policy of 1805, 'whether it is permissible to talk so much as one does about mistakes, missed opportunities and acts of negligence. Everything takes place [2] above the heads of the participants, with a kind of necessity which has in it something inevitable, like a Fate.' [3]

Did Ranke not yield to this inclination too frequently here and there? Did not the higher individuality of the 'universal element' threaten to some extent to damn the concrete individuality of the particular man who was acting? Was it not also possible that a new unwished-for rationalism might develop out of this, by virtue of which *raison d'état*, considered as a rational recognition of the actions dictated by the universal power-situation, might be accepted as effective, whilst other motives of a spiritual or animal type, perhaps even quite elemental passions, were also at work? All action prompted by *raison d'état* is certainly rooted (as we have been expounding all along) in the elemental power-impulse, and the sap from these roots penetrates right up as far as the highest and noblest blossoms of the statesman's conduct. Ranke was certainly conscious of this, and frequently hinted at it in his work; and yet when he was older he showed an increasing tendency to set aside the elemental motive in favour of the rational and factual motives which sprang from the 'universal movement'.[4] His fundamental mood of optimism in the face of the power-struggles of history thus to a

[1] Dove, *Ausgewählte Schriftchen*, p. 266.

[2] Thus in the 2nd edition (*Werke*, 47, 145), whereas in the 1st edition (*Denkwürdigkeiten Hardenbergs*, 1, 539) the word is 'developed'. The change is perhaps due to Ranke's increasing tendency to stress what was general in the individual instance.

[3] Cf. also *Englische Geschichte*, *Werke*, 17, 279: 'It is a great error of men, in the case of great upheavals and agitations, to expect or fear too much from personal intentions. The movement follows its own powerful current, which carries along with it even those who appear to be leading it.'

[4] This is shown especially by his various remarks about Napoleon. In the *Consalvi* (*Werke*, 40, 42 f.), the elemental, even the hateful traits in the politics of Napoleon are presented alongside, and linked up with, those motives which stemmed from the 'process of things'. In the *Hardenberg*, the latter already outweigh the former; in the reply, composed for his own use, to M. Duncker's interpretation of 'the lust for conquest' (*Forsch. zur brand. u. preuss. Geschichte*, 5), the latter motives are the only ones that are stressed. For Ranke's judgment on Napoleon, cf. also the statements of Wiedemann, *Deutsche Revue*, 17, 2, p. 100. On p. 105 of the same there is also a short and accurate description of Ranke's attitude to the problem of politics and morals.

certain extent hid their murky side from him. Wherever these appeared in a naked and terrible fashion, he too could fall into the language of genuine moral indignation, and he recognized the fact that there could be a power-policy without objective or rational principle. 'This urge for conquest, which only wishes to acquire territory (whether it is that the activity of war brings a direct pleasure for itself, or that the territory can be acquired without any great difficulty), is as insatiable as sensuality or avarice; it seems to rest on the same basis in the mind as these passions do.' [1]

But this was said about the Ottomans who lived outside the historical world which claimed his sympathetic understanding. For the western community of States he also conceded that certain differences existed in the fundamental character of the politics of the different nations; for instance, 'that the French are mostly concerned with the appearance of external power, and the English with the legal arrangement of their internal relations'.[2] But at the same time he saw certain constantly moderating and regulating forces at work, which set some bounds, not only to the crude urge for conquest, but also to the exclusive egoism of interest shown by the separate States. Although in general he denied that any moral progress was made by humanity, he could still believe that limited progress had been made in political morality within the last century. When judging the Klein-Schnellendorf agreement of Frederick the Great [3] he said: 'The modern age has also made great progress in that it is now concerned to abolish from negotiations the old double-dealing methods of politicians. In those times this type of political negotiation was still quite usual and even to a certain extent approved.' Ranke would certainly not have concealed from himself the fact that this progress had not yet reached the root of political conduct, but represented rather a new and better type of convention. A movement towards the conventional in the best sense was discernible altogether in the whole period of the Restoration; the general sense at that time of renewed peace and calm radiates through Ranke's historical interpretation. It was this that gave rise to the optimistic words in *The Great Powers*: 'It is true that world-movements are repeatedly destroying the system of justice; but after they have passed on, the system re-establishes itself, and every endeavour is once more made to complete it.' Ultimately, it was the religious values implicit in Ranke's interpretation of history that were influential here in the background. 'Religious truth must . . . keep the State continually reminded of the origin and aim of earthly life, of the rights of neighbouring States and the kinship between all the nations. The State would otherwise be in

[1] *Die Osmanen und die spanische Monarchie*, *Werke*, 35/36, 55.
[2] *Englische Geschichte*, *Werke*, 14, vii.
[3] *Preussische Geschichte*, *Werke*, 27/28, 479; cf. also *Werke*, 29, 214.

danger of degenerating into authoritarianism, and stiffening into a one-sided xenophobia.' [1] It was thus that Ranke acquired a profound belief in the strength of a kind of common sense in Europe, which would prevent the power-struggles of the States from degenerating into radical wars of annihilation. At that time such a common sense did exist, but does it still exist today?

This association between the two points of view, the universally European and that of State egoism,—an association which is so characteristic of Ranke himself—was also ascribed by him in one of his generalizations to the great statesmen of recent history. 'It is true that Gustavus Adolphus always remained King of Sweden and never lost sight of the interests of his country; but at the same time he also held fast to the universal aspects which arose from the conflicts of the world situation. Nothing ever happens on earth, without these two aspects being associated; they can hardly be distinguished apart in the consciousness of a king or a military commander.' [2]

Finally, let us also notice here once again the very definite progress that had been made beyond the doctrine of interest of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This doctrine had isolated, not only the executive statesmen, but also the State interests that guided them; it therefore tended to treat them in a lifeless and mechanical manner. Thus the observer was seldom fully conscious of the collective life of Europe as a whole (with which they were interacting mutually)—whereas (as Ranke's words indicate) the executive statesman was very well able to possess it naïvely and directly. Historical writing in the eighteenth century, which started out from the interest involved in the balance of power, was somewhat better able to reproduce this collective life of Europe.[3] But Ranke's *The Great Powers* (which was a culmina-

[1] *Reformationsgeschichte*, *Werke*, 1, 4. [2] *Preussische Geschichte*, *Werke*, 25, 207.

[3] The original intention of this book, which was to show the importance of the doctrine of interest for the writing of history (as we have done in the case of Pufendorf and Frederick the Great) and follow it out step by step up to Ranke, was forced to yield to the even more important task of showing the changes that took place in the idea of *raison d'état* in general. But this gap in our presentation has actually been filled in from another aspect by H. v. Caemmerer's brilliant study *Rankes Grosse Mächte und die Geschichtschreibung des 18. Jahrhunderts* (*Studien und Versuche zur neueren Geschichte*, *Max-Lenz-Festschrift*, 1910). This traces the line of development of the realistic interpretation of the State-system held together by the common interest in the balance of power from Pufendorf through Bolingbroke, Schmauss, Achenwall, Ancillon, Heeren, up to Gentz, who was Ranke's political teacher, and also shows what is specifically new in Ranke.—It is interesting that Ranke's first teacher of history in Leipzig, Ernst Karl Wieland, also wrote a *Versuch einer Geschichte des deutschen Staatsinteresse* (3 vols., 1791–4). But the lectures of this inveterate rationalist had almost no effect at all on Ranke (*Werke*, 53/54, 28). And one can understand this, when one sees Wieland's doctrine of interest, which he has watered down into the idea of a harmless welfare State, to be considered as a machine. Cf. also Joachimsen, in the new collected edition of the Works of Ranke, 1, lxxxv.

tion of the literary development of the 'interests of rulers' that began with Rohan's book) was the first work to transform the interests into vital functions of the State individualities that had been heightened into tangible, brilliant personalities, interweave them with all the other tendencies that arose, let them re-unite into new superior kinds of connection and thus build, above the world of the separate individual States, a superior collective world of the West, from which it then became possible to catch a glance of other immeasurable heights beyond. So that finally, in fact, the 'really living element in history' no longer appeared to be this or that single concrete interest, but instead the 'universal movement'.

It was because he started out from just such a universal movement of world-reason, that Hegel was able to recognize and sanction Machiavellism, *raison d'état* and power-policy. Here, once again, we see the paths taken by the two great thinkers (who were really so independent of one another) touching. For in the case of Ranke too, it is also the universal movement of historical life which evokes and justifies the developments of *raison d'état*. But the logical conclusion of pantheism, to which Hegel carried this doctrine, was intolerable to him. Reverence for what was unfathomable, and the moral law in his breast, prevented him from taking the last step which would deify world history and its supreme protagonist, the State, and place them absolutely above morality. It is clear that this nebulous and wavering dualism could not constitute the last possible solution of the problem.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

TREITSCHKE

WE are now nearing the point where our investigations begin to touch on the historical significance of the fate experienced by Germany in the Great War. It was suggested to us that we had indulged the cult of power and of *raison d'état* to an impermissible extent; and on this basis our conquerors assumed the right to treat us, not as a nation honourably defeated, but rather as a criminal. This reproach was quite clearly the mask of their own power-policy and *raison d'état*, but it appealed to certain facts which we ourselves have already begun to throw light on here in our analysis of Hegel, Fichte and Ranke. How did it really come about that the ideas of Machiavelli, which arose on Latin territory and developed within the realm of Latin States, were minted afresh after the beginning of the nineteenth century and this precisely on German soil? All that we have already said towards explaining this must now be assembled and supplemented, in order to reach a proper understanding of the man whom foreign countries consider to be almost the principal agent in seducing Germany to the cult of power—Heinrich v. Treitschke.

The original German ideas on the subject of the State did not tend in general to recognize any special right on the part of *raison d'état* and Machiavellism. Luther desired that Christian men should build up a Christian State; [1] a Machiavelli in sixteenth-century Germany would have been unthinkable. The doctrine of *raison d'état* (which was felt to be something alien) invaded the country during the course of the seventeenth century under the impact of the stirring experiences of the Thirty Years War, and was more concerned with the securing of internal power than with the extending of the external power of the German territorial rulers who were now asserting themselves. But the power-policy practised by the great founders of the State of Prussia and Brandenburg (apart from influence exerted more internally by

[1] This one sentence should have saved various reviewers of my book from asking the absurd question, why I have not dealt with Luther in it. Cf. also my essay *Luther über christl. Gemeinwesen u. christl. Staat, Hist. Zeitschr.*, 121.

Frederick William I) was nothing else but an imitation of what Richelieu and Louis XIV had demonstrated. It was not only in his capacity of philosopher, but also as a power-politician, that Frederick the Great knew how to learn from French arts. To struggle upwards to power and independence from a position of powerlessness and helplessness—it was this that gave the inner impulse towards accepting Machiavellian ideas and methods in Germany. We have already seen this motive operating in the case of Fichte and Hegel. But, on glancing at Kant, at Fichte's earlier doctrines and at the Freiherr vom Stein's ideal of the State, one sees that the really permanent German ideas on the subject of the State had remained thoroughly un-Machiavellian.[1] Stein desired, in analogy to Luther, that moral men should found a moral State. Two things would have to happen, in order that German thought should now be guided into yet other paths. In the first place, the growing desire for national unity and independence would have to emphasize the need for power more sharply. And moreover the further effects would have to be revealed of the intellectual revolution which took place in Germany at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The particular paths which the German mind was now beginning to follow were also capable (if they were followed with a one-sided energy) of creating a rift between Germany and the remainder of the West.

The ideas of identity and individuality constituted the new ferments. The idea of identity softened the appearance of the elemental dark side of historical life; the idea of individuality led on to a new individualizing ethic and mode of viewing history, which also conceded to the State the right of inner self-determination, of free movement according to its own law, i.e. according to *raison d'état*. Both ideas (but particularly the idea of individuality) also permeated the thought of other nations, and linked with analogous needs there too. It was these nations most of all, which now on all sides began to become conscious of their individuality, and now, each in its own way, entered upon the great question of deciding between the ideals of life as universal or national, as general or individual, between world-citizenship or the national State. This process, in so far as it concerns Germany, has been described in our earlier book. If one compares Germany with the other nations, one sees at once that, with respect to the intellectual movement, German thought was more radical and conscious than West European thought as a whole. It was in thought, and not in action, that we were different. All the great nations and States of the earth have acted in recent times (just as earlier on) under the powerful impulse of the new national sentiments and *a fortiori* in accordance with State egoism; all have ruthlessly violated the existing territorial rights of the other States and nations that stood in their way. But owing to the fact that in all the

[1] Cf. O. Hintze, *Der deutsche Staatsgedanke, Zeitschr. für Politik*, 13, 128 ff.

other nations the dualism between ethical norms and political conduct (which had permeated the world since the days of Machiavelli) was still as a whole maintained, political practice could be cloaked over by means of several moral ideologies being recognized simultaneously; whereas it became a specific need for Germany that this dualism should be overcome, and that the conflict between politics and morals should be resolved by some sort of higher synthesis. This need became increasingly strong as more varied moral tasks were set before the modern State, and in proportion as the individual in general occupied himself more zealously with the State. Even if the identity systems of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were to collapse, the need for identity itself, the deep desire for an inner unity and harmony in all vital laws and processes nevertheless remained powerfully established in the German spirit. Its dreamy inclination to become bogged down in the abysses, caused it to linger stubbornly at precisely those points in life where this harmony was most difficult to establish, and where the principles split asunder most violently. And it is just this element of principle in all things that has always attracted German thought. If this was not to collapse, then it was certainly possible that, in a natural reaction against the task (which was felt to be insoluble), the German robustness and crudity should vent themselves, call things by their right names, recognize the duality either with or without cynicism, and decide in favour of the principle that stood closest to rich-blooded and forceful reality—just as Faust, from a sense of despair with the intellectual and spiritual element which he is fundamentally seeking and cannot find, wants to plunge into a wild sensuality. Even Frederick the Great earlier on had exhibited a purely German characteristic, when he, who carried within himself both Machiavelli and Anti-Machiavelli simultaneously, from time to time admitted to one or the other with frankness and conviction—and at the same time with a kind of indiscretion which is generally alien to the Anglo-Saxon and Latin mind. For it is just these indiscreet truths which attract the Germans; whereas the Western Europeans, perhaps from an unconscious expediency, often show a preference for the convention rather than the naked but dangerous truth. Perhaps in recent times this has been even stronger than before, when Machiavelli and Naudé were not ashamed to lay bare the starkness of political man. Even in England Francis Bacon had at one time dared to praise Machiavelli openly, because he 'says without hypocrisy what men usually do, and not what they ought to do'.[1] But even he did not want the dangerous spirit of *raison d'état* to master him completely, and sought a moral and juridical justification for the purely natural impulses

[1] *De augmentis scientiarum*, Bk. VII, ch. 2. Bacon's attitude towards *raison d'état* has now, at my instigation, been investigated by W. Richter, *Bacons Staatsdenken* in *Zeitschr. für öff. Recht*, VII, 3.

of the State. And after him the English spirit (which had been altered by the religious movement of the seventeenth century) showed an increasing tendency to change the sword of the naked power-policy, which England always pursued, into the sword of an executor of the law—whether summoned to the task by God or by justice and morality. This was indeed (as has frequently been observed before) the most effective kind of Machiavellism, which could be brought by the national Will of power-policy to become unconscious of itself, and to appear (not only to others, but also to itself) as being pure humanity, candour and religion.

As a rule, this unconscious expediency in political conduct, this political instinct, is lacking in Germans. Bismarck was an important, but rare exception. And certainly he too, particularly in the years when he was casting off the fetters of the universalist ideas of his Christian German friends, yielded to the German tendency to call things by their proper names, and to recognize unashamedly the State necessity of power-policy, outwardly robust, but without inner cynicism, from a deep feeling of responsibility for the State as a whole. Then his instinctive certainty carried him away past the problems and abysses which concern us here. Thus it is true to say about all his conduct, even the boldest and most ruthless of it, what Ranke said about Frederick the Great's conflict between morals and politics: 'The hero must be justified at least in his own eyes.'

But amongst contemporary Germans the tendency to see the problem of power politics in terms of the world as a whole, had been growing since the time of Hegel. We have already pointed out the influence that Hegel himself had on this; and it is expressed even more forcibly (if a little exaggeratedly) in Heller's analysis. There was a more tranquil and slow, but in the long run increasingly penetrating influence which results from the pattern of Ranke's mode of writing history and the historical school founded by him; this was towards understanding power-policy as an organic vital function of the different States, without however justifying all its excesses indiscriminately. At the same time the prestige of the State was increasing all along the line, with all parties, as the struggles began to alter it into the modern constitutional State. In the process people's ideas were in many ways directed (in accordance with the older original German conception of the State) more towards the tasks of domestic politics, culture and morals, than towards the tasks of power-policy, more towards the Ethos than towards the Kratos of the State. But the latter also had a powerful advocate in the need for national unity. 'The path of power', cried Dahlmann on 22nd January 1849 in the Frankfurt Parliament, 'is the only one that will satisfy and appease the fermenting impulse to freedom—for it is not solely freedom that the German is thinking of, it is

rather power, which has hitherto been refused him, and after which he hankers.'

Out of a sense of powerlessness, and because this impresses a great nation more forcefully than it does a small nation (which is protected by envy of the great nations), there was a longing for the power-State. The year 1848, shattering as it did the hopes of power and unity, directed people's thoughts all the more towards this aim. In 1853 A. L. von Rochau published his *Foundations of realistic policy, as applied to the conditions of the German State*, which brought the new slogan of *Realpolitik* into currency and culminated in the words: 'To rule means to exercise power, and power can only be exercised by whoever possesses power. This direct connection between rule and power constitutes the fundamental truth of all policy and offers the key to the whole of history' (p. 2). In 1858 Karl Bollmann wrote his extremely characteristic and very frank *Defence of Machiavellism*, with the motto 'The Fatherland before everything else', and with the quotation borrowed from the *raison d'état* of antiquity: *Adhuc nemo exstitit, cujus virtutes nullo vitiorum confinio laederentur*. At that time Rochau's work fell like a thunderbolt (as Treitschke testifies from his own experience [1]) into many a young mind. His proposition, 'Neither a principle, nor an idea, nor even a contract will suffice to unite the divided forces in Germany, but only some superior force which swallows up the others', produced in Treitschke's youthful mind the obvious doctrine that nothing but Prussian battalions could unite Germany. Bollmann's work was indeed mentioned by Treitschke in the *Literarisches Centralblatt* and scornfully rejected [2]—but his own basic ideas were not so very far removed from it, as is shown by his intimate correspondence.[3] That Machiavelli, as a fervent patriot, should have placed power at the service of a great idea, this was the thing by which he was inwardly most moved, and which reconciled him to 'many objectionable and horrible opinions of the great Florentine'. Treitschke even supplemented for himself that crudely naturalistic-sounding proposition of Rochau's, by discerning in Rochau the idealist who was doing no more than predicting the victory of that power which was supported by the idea. To unite the world of power and the world of ideas under the leadership of ideas, this was and remained the higher intent of Treitschke's patriotism. And since the whole German intellectual movement concerning power-policy of the late nineteenth century was concentrated in Treitschke, the task presented itself, of analysing his programme of power-policy and the way in which he developed the idea of *raison d'état*. Most of all, we must ask whether and to what extent he succeeded in bringing the world of power into harmony with the world of ideas.

[1] *Aufsätze*, 4, 193. [2] *Ibid.*, 4, 500. [3] *Briefe*, 1, 352 (1856).

Treitschke

Let us start with the picture which was conceived by an enemy country of his doctrine of power. The propagandist work written by Oxford Professors in 1914, entitled *Why we are at war*, contains a special chapter on the new German theory of the State which was proclaimed by Treitschke: 'The war, in which England is now engaged against Germany, is basically a war between two different principles —that of *raison d'état* and that of the rule of law.' The doctrine of Machiavelli, which was now proclaimed once again by Treitschke, that the State was power, and his further doctrine that the supreme moral duty of the State was to foster its power, were tending to destroy the definitive character of international obligations, and were further tending towards a eulogy of military glory. According to Treitschke, power ought indeed to serve the higher purpose of culture; but with him and his followers this resulted in German culture being advertised throughout the world as the highest type of culture. Moreover it was said that he only conceded international agreements to be binding in so far as this was expedient for the State. That he looked upon war as the only remedy for sick nations which threatened to sink into selfish individualism. And that this whole philosophy appeared as paganism, or rather as barbarism with a veneer of morality.

It was naïve enough of the Englishmen to praise their own policy which led them into the war, as a piece of furniture without veneer, as the massive wood of absolute legality and fidelity to treaties. Their idea was that the new German theory said, 'Our interest is our right', whereas the old, very old English theory was: 'Right is our interest.' The words confirm the view that average English minds were not capable of fathoming the problematical element in power-policy, because they refused to derive it from practical instinct.[1] But did the more acute eye of the enemy perhaps discern certain weaknesses in Treitschke's doctrines? The English picture is of the nature of a caricature, but one can occasionally learn something from a caricature. Let us try to discover what we can from the caricature.

Treitschke thought (one might almost say) in imperatives. One often has the impression with him that his statements are like decrees which maintain some fact only to be established by internal evidence. His demonstrations thereby acquire a certain violence and explosiveness, indeed even an impatient character. The proof for something he wanted, those decrees which he laid down about things, always sprang from him ready armed like Minerva from the head of Zeus. Out of a very vital, rich and forceful contemplation of things, there sprang from him these

[1] But even before the War it was admitted by frank Englishmen. Admiral Sir John Fisher remarked on the occasion of the Conference at the Hague in 1899, that he knew only one principle, 'Might is Right'. *Gr. Politik der europ. Kabinette*, 1871–1914, vol. 15, 230.

decrees; and a morally high and pure Will conferred on the pictures, seen by his artistic eye, that element of solidity and convincing evidence, which made them into proofs.

What wonder if this association of the most noble moral force and the most varied sensuousness and vitality made an overwhelming impression on all thoughts? For more than a generation he became leader of the nation, i.e. of those strata of the nation which wanted to establish and maintain the national State as the giver of power and freedom. But he thereby also became the corrupter of those who prized desire more highly than thought, and now found in his inspiringly convincing statements and decrees a substitute for all their own intellectual endeavours. His severe and religious earnestness was in danger of making something rigid, immovable and absolute out of all his ideas, however much he might assert their historical changeability. The crisis of 1866 was decisive in fixing his ideas on the State, which had hitherto been in flux. The deep gratitude for those forces which at that time imbued his longing for the national State became too concentrated.[1] Certainly the power-State and the power-policy of the conservative Prussian military monarchy was altogether indispensable for the establishing of the German national State; but the new community soon required, in order to remain abreast of the social and economic changes, a basic re-fashioning and development of its institutions, which had been hindered by too rigid a belief (under Treitschke's influence) in the blessings of the Prussian military monarchy. The belief in these blessings became at the same time (when extended to a universal degree) a rigid belief in the blessings of power in the life of the State in general. That power belongs essentially to the State, is something that we too have emphasized from the very beginning; and our whole investigation has no other object than to analyse this fact more deeply. But in the process it also intends to reveal the problematical implications, the dangers and limitations of the idea of the power-State. Power is always and for ever part of the essence of the State, but it alone does not constitute the whole essence; for justice, morality and religion form an integral part of this essence as well—or at least they intend to, as soon as the State has achieved its first rudimentary objective of becoming powerful. They, and all the other interlinking spiritual forces of national life, demand to be absorbed into the essence of the State, even if at the same time they cannot and will not surrender their own autonomy, which is part of their own nature. The growing prestige of the State during the course of the nineteenth century was founded on this very point, that richer cultural and moral tasks were being set before it. So one may say that power was certainly the most original,

[1] In connection with what follows, cf. also my review of vol. 3 of Treitschke's Letters in *Histor. Zeitschr.*, 123, 315 ff.

essential and permanent factor in the essence of the State, but it is not and never will be the only one. And *raison d'état*, the invisible helmsman and creator of the State, which seeks to bring into existence everything essential for it, does not exhaust itself (when it develops to its higher stages) in acquiring this first basic requirement of power, but must also endeavour to satisfy the requirements of those other vital forces—and precisely in order to find a deeper, more permanent and spiritual basis for power itself. But Treitschke repeatedly continued to announce that the essence of the State was nothing else but power,[1] thereby limiting it and corrupting those countless people who in life's struggles hanker after simple pithy maxims, and causing them to overestimate and revere simple power, and thus see the basic problem of the State in much cruder terms. It is rather in this way that the problem is represented by Treitschke's epigone, Dietrich Schäfer, in his book *World and State* of 1922, where he clings too rigidly to a truth that has been comprehended one-sidedly.

And yet Treitschke came to contradict himself when he restricted the essence of the State exclusively to power. For the essence of a social formation contains, not only the substance on which it is based, but also the purpose which this serves. But Treitschke was not very far from looking upon the power of the State as an end in itself. This was indeed his reproach to Machiavelli: 'The frightful thing about his doctrine is not the immorality of the methods he recommends, but the emptiness of this State, which exists only to exist. Hardly a word is said about all the moral purposes of rule, which are the only things that justify this hard-won power.' [2] 'The State', it says in the *Politics*, 'is not physical power as an end-in-itself; it is power for the purpose of protecting and furthering the higher types of human spiritual possessions.' The pure doctrine of power seemed to him simultaneously immoral and empty of content.

We must go into the matter still further, in order to reach an understanding of his own doctrine of power. We must examine carefully,

[1] The most extreme expression of this is certainly in *Bundestaat und Einheitstaat*, *Aufsätze*, 2, 152: 'In the first place, the second place and in the third place, the essence of the State is power.'

[2] *Aufsätze*, 4, 428; cf. *Politik*, 1, 91 and 92, 544, and *Zehn Jahre deutscher Kämpfe*, *Auswahl*, p. 178. Thus Treitschke's interpretation of Machiavelli changed as he grew older, cf. above p. 396 f. In later years he no longer believed what he had believed in 1856, namely that the *Principe* had been written with the patriotic aim of freeing Italy from the foreigners.—It is unnecessary to prove that he was far from accepting the idea imputed to him by his Oxford interpreter, i.e. of taking the purpose of State power to be the spread of German culture all over the world. His essays dealing with non-German history show the greatest respect for the individual life of foreign cultures, and he even says about war (*Politik*, 1, 73): 'It does not produce merely a hostile contact between nations, for through war they learn to know and respect each other's peculiar qualities.'

not only his own inner motives, but also the intellectual and political realm of thought in modern Germany, with which it was connected.

If one compares the role played by the power-will of the State and by *raison d'état* in the historical writings of Ranke and Treitschke, one is astounded at the quite different spirit in which the two men treat the foreign power-struggles of States. Treitschke certainly agreed with Ranke (as he emphasized) in recognizing the basic scientific outlook, reminiscent of Goethe, 'which explained all historical development as the joint effect of universal world-relationships and free personal forces'.[1] But in Ranke the stress was laid on the universal world-relationships, whereas Treitschke put it on free personal forces. Ranke went so far as to assert that the statesman only had true significance, in so far as he used his position to promote the universal movement, the really vital element in history. This involved the view that he only possessed significance to the extent that he recognized and promoted the true and properly understood *raison d'état* of his State. For it is the universal movement that produces the very developments and interplay of *raison d'état*, within which the statesman has to function. Consequently, it is the interplay of these State interests that occupies the foreground of Ranke's method of writing history. The forceful stream of the 'universal movement', which his profound gaze always saw before him, certainly embraced more than the interplay of these interests and also comprehended its entire mingled content of universal and spiritual forces and of completely personal forces. They are all contained in the phenomenon that attracted him more than anything else, the vital development of great State personalities, and 'the old tale of world history', which sprang from them and hovered over them. Thus his historical work (as we observed before) was really nothing else but an uncommon intellectual deepening of the doctrine of *raison d'état* of State interest.

On the other hand one may say of Treitschke's historical writing, that it created great new, and at the same time uncommonly intellectualized, possibilities for the Hero-epic, the oldest and most directly human form of the great historical tradition. Men make history, was his phrase. In spite of all the knowledge about the supra-individual intellectual entities of history, which he acquired as a pupil of German historicism, it is not these that dominate his picture of history; on the contrary, it is individual men, who certainly bear in themselves the picture of these entities and are guided by them, but principally have to answer for their own responsible action. Through all his work there radiate the forceful outlines of men of flesh and blood; history seems to consist of their personal wishes. The outlines of the universal movement, of supra-individual ideas and tendencies, are certainly not lacking

[1] *Deutsche Geschichte*, 4, 466.

in the background, but they do not occupy nearly so dominating a position as in Ranke. It is not the aspect of *fert unda nec regitur* that strikes us, but the view of the swimmers struggling in the waves. Thus Ranke's 'universal movement' is resolved into the separate struggles of fighting heroes, and the depiction of power-struggles always becomes simultaneously a court of morals sitting in judgment on the personalities who are acting. Let us take, for instance, the summary of a situation in world politics, the European crisis of 1830: [1] 'The language of calm intelligence . . . blind hate . . . vainglorious arrogance of the despot . . . the audacious greediness of the revolution' are jumbled together here. The supra-personal drama, the interconnection of these personal forces and passions with the sway of great factual necessities, with the guiding genius of *raison d'état* poised above, does not vanish altogether; but it fades into the background, it does not claim the attention. Whoever wishes to learn to understand foreign policy, will find more enlightenment in Ranke than in Treitschke.

Thus *raison d'état* itself does not play the principal role in Treitschke's picture of history, but when he looks at the State as a thinker, he is 'glad' to clasp Machiavelli's hand, and praises him because 'he, with the whole gigantic consistency of his thought, was the first to place right in the forefront of all policy the great idea, that the State is power'.[2] There is a remarkable result: the power on which he based the essence of the State (fully consciously, but in unconscious contradiction to his really richer view of this essence) remains undeveloped in him, and does not reach its completely specific expansion in the exercise of *raison d'état*. Thus he did not entirely absorb into himself that which he found so important and marvellous in Machiavelli; he does not bear the full fruit that one could expect.

In such cases where the mere exposition and comparison of concepts threatens to land one in an inexplicable contradiction, a look at the philosophical background helps one out of the impasse.

If it is the case that Ranke treated great power-policy with such interest and sympathy, and thereby understood it more subtly and profoundly than Treitschke, this was in no way due to any special pleasure in power or to any particular will to political power on his own part; for this was lacking in him, as is shown by his own practical attempts at politics. His fundamental tendency in the way of viewing the world brought him much closer to that overwhelming drama of the constellations of States and the paths they followed, the unfolding of great individual vital essences, both intellectual and real, out of the universal and divine basis of the world. Here let us recall once again the distinction drawn by Dilthey, between the great principal tendencies of idealism, objective idealism, which proceeds from the element of

[1] *Ibid.*, 4, 56. [2] *Politik*, 1, 91.

divinity that fills the whole world, and subjective idealism, which subordinates the world to the free personality and treats the mind as independent. Hegel's objective idealism, raised to the level of a consistent system of identity, was easily capable of adapting *raison d'état* and power-policy as instruments of the Demiurge in the whole divinely suffused world-process. Ranke's objective idealism, linking together the needs for identity and the dualistic needs, was capable of recognizing *raison d'état* (at least in the aspect of the divine world-process which is accessible to us) as the most important impulse towards the unfolding of the real and intellectual life of humanity. Fichte was the philosopher of subjective idealism. Starting with the moral will to shape the world according to reason, to free the German nation from its fetters, he was even capable of taking up harsh *raison d'état* as a tool wherewith to liberate the intellect. Just as Ranke was related to Hegel, so Treitschke was to a certain extent related to Fichte. He continued the latter's subjective idealism, but not in a pure and unqualified form, but rather blended with elements of objective idealism, which were not even far removed from Fichte himself. There is perhaps a natural resistance in the modern historian against taking up a consistent philosophical point of view. One may perhaps despise him for this as being eclectic; but it is indeed his duty to reproduce faithfully the rich variety, in fact the very contradictoriness of motives which force themselves upon him in any thoughtful consideration of human events, and to unite these under the dominant key of his own being.

Let us now pursue these dominant keys of subjective idealism in Treitschke. It was not universal history (as in the case of Ranke), but rather national history that was consonant with his desires and capabilities, because the struggles of the nations to achieve a State that suited them, a State which embraced and protected their ideal values, was the central thought of his historical writings and his politics. Behind it lay the central thought of his personality, which saw nation and State as the indispensable means allocated by nature for the development of a free moral personality. 'Only a nation full of a strong sense of personal freedom can achieve and maintain personal freedom; and only under the protection of political freedom is it possible for true personal freedom to prosper.' [1] In this dominant key of the need for personal freedom, there was in operation a most powerful after-effect of the idealistic individualism of the classical age. This is explained by the fact that, in spite of all the awakening of German national pride (which he tried to further), he was always anxious not to lose the free sense of world-citizenship. In later life he lamented (as one knows) the fact that he was too much restrained by exclusive fostering of the

[1] *Die Freiheit, Aufsätze*, 3, 19.

national idea.[1] He wanted to remain a free individual, laying himself open to the whole world, while at the same time remaining within all the ties of nation and State.[2]

But the fact that these ties were indispensable for the life of the free personality, was made clear to him not only by the straining of his nation towards a national State (which thrilled the soul of the boys and young men), but also by the new historical and idealistic mode of thought which he came across and absorbed. His admission to the 'deeply-felt' basic ideas of a school of historical jurisprudence occurs continually through all his writings; and the doctrine that 'everything living is individual' [3] was certainly capable of being accepted with joy by the aesthetic part of him, by the sense that had opened up in him for all the variety of forms and colours in the world. States are individual, but the State itself is aboriginal and laid down in the very essence of humanity. It was on this knowledge, which he realized had only been found again in the nineteenth century, and which he discovered had already been expressed by Aristotle, the master of all political theory, that he now (as it were) based everything again. For he now felt once again a strong need for the Absolute, which protected him (just as it did Ranke, only in a more rugged, deliberate form) from the danger that truth would disintegrate into purely relative truth. It was certainly true (as he said) that the historian was on the whole restricted to finding only relative truths; but fortunately there were a few absolute truths that remained definite for him, for example, that the State was power.[4] Also there were certain absolutely true moral ideas which had already been made actual. From this one can see clearly, how closely his doctrine of power was bound up with his ethical need for an absolute sheet-anchor in the unruly sea of history.

But then (one is bound to ask) was the discovery of this knowledge —that the essence of the State was power, always and absolutely— tantamount to discovering a moral truth of absolute value? In the first instance it was only the recognition of a crudely elemental fact which belongs to the dark side of human life. The State strives after power, just as a man strives after food; but the State is much more insatiable than a man, and is only held in check by *raison d'état*, which is certainly

[1] *Politik*, 1, 31; cf. *Briefe*, 3, 373 and 513; *Politik*, 1, 273.

[2] The first major attempt to reach a scholarly understanding of Treitschke and his doctrine of the State (Bailleu's essay on him in the *Deutsche Rundschau* of October 1896) rightly says: 'However high Treitschke may have set the State, he always placed higher still the sanctity of personality, and moral freedom.' There is much that is good in the first work about him by Herzfeld, *Staat und Persönlichkeit bei H. v. Treitschke, Preuss. Jahrbücher*, Dec. 1923. There are also some valuable observations by O. Westphal in *Der Staatsbegriff H. v. Treitschkes* in the *Festschrift* dedicated to me, *Deutscher Staat und deutsche Parteien*, 1922.

[3] *Politik*, 1, 4.

[4] *Loc. cit.*, 1, 11.

capable of entering into the ethical sphere, but does not invariably enter there. This was the dualistic recognition that we started out from. The State seemed to us an amphibian. This concession may and must be made to the naturalistic empiricism of the later nineteenth century, to all the facts of the dark and natural side of human life, and of all the mechanical and biological causal connections which modern positivism is accustomed to stress in a one-sided but heuristic manner. But now this is clear proof that Treitschke, looked at from the point of view of history of thought, stands directly in the period between the beginning and end of the nineteenth century. On this side lay a joyful belief in the identity of mind and nature, in the unity, beauty and depth of the divine nature; on the other side, the hard knowledge that Man is made out of what is common, and that custom is his wet-nurse—a knowledge which the great idealists of the early nineteenth century forced themselves to admit with some bitterness, and which was yet always being illumined again by a belief in the nobility of humanity, and in the rational element in history. But in Treitschke the two aspects of life were struggling directly against one another, stubbornly. And this is not the least of the reasons why his historical writing so often appears to be blown upon by contrary winds, and to constitute such a sudden alternation of gentle sunlight and storm clouds. He found that Hegel's philosophy of history, perplexed in a happy optimism, provided no answer to the serious question of conscience: why it is that, in the everlasting progress of his race, individual Man always remains just as weak and sinful as he always was.[1] He also considered Ranke's interpretation of history to be too optimistic, because it paid too little attention to the animal passions, the daemonic forces of human life.[2] The Christian doctrine about the radical sinfulness of human nature seemed to him only too true. Already therefore his strong moral feeling (nourished by old Christian tradition) for the evil element in Man, led him away from the pure mood of identity and its fits of pantheism; it led him on instead to the acrid sense of reality in the late nineteenth century, to which he often admitted and which could be gained without necessarily falling into sober Positivism or into complete Materialism. Thus he rejected, not only the Hegelian deification of the entire process of history, but also his deification of the State.[3] It is not permissible (he explained) to see in the State, as Hegel did, the moral idea made actual; the State was a superior type of natural necessity, its nature was crude and robust, completely part of the external order of human life. In the first instance, he said, the State was power; and the whole history of States was permeated by the frightful *βία βία βιάζεται*.[4]

[1] *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3, 719.
[2] *Ibid.*, 4, 467; *Politik*, 1, 144; *Zehn Jahre deutscher Kämpfe, Auswahl*, p. 98.
[3] *Politik*, 1, 32 and 62; cf. also Westphal, *loc. cit.*, p. 162. [4] *Politik*, 1, 20, 32, 35.

But now the decisive point is that, when faced with the elemental dynamics of power-conflicts among States, instead of allowing them consistently to remain as merely natural, he bathed them once again in an ethical light and thereby sanctioned them. It was from this point onwards that he began to borrow from objective idealism and even from the Hegelian philosophy of identity. These things that he borrowed were quite clearly expressed in the remarkable discussion of socialism, which he had with Schmoller in 1874. Schmoller asserted that the economic class-structure sprang from injustice and authority; this 'as-it-were tragic guilt' was passed on from generation to generation, and for the first time after thousands of years it was now finding, in the slowly awakening sense of justice among the upper classes, an expiation that would never be adequate. And what he said about the economic class-struggle is obviously valid too of the power-struggle of the State. This too is based on injustice and authority, and in it too a tragic debt is transmitted from generation to generation, with the sole difference that it is even less capable of being expiated than the class-struggle is, because no praetor rules over the States. This is the fundamental assumption from which we started. But Treitschke violently rejected Schmoller's 'doctrine about the biting of the apple of social knowledge and the subsequent fall into sin'. Authority yes, but not injustice, was under discussion here. 'Power struggles with power, and wherever the lesser stands in the way of the greater, he is subdued. In these necessary struggles, there is no more trace of injustice, no more of a tragic guilt, than in every act of our sinful race. It is the *reason* of the early period of humanity, that the strong should force the weak to do its will.' [1] 'Wherever we find in brighter centuries a struggle for existence going on among the nations . . . there holds sway everywhere calmly the *same* moral law, over a wealth of becoming, of painful becoming full of conflict: What is common shall serve what is noble, the aged shall serve the youthful, and it is only by this service that it acquires the right to continue existing.' These are echoes of Hegel that we can hear all at once in this passage. Elemental processes are raised to the level of 'reason', and are sanctioned as the operation of 'moral laws'. Treitschke expressed it in this connection as follows: namely, that without the idea 'that a rational element exists' all philosophy would become mere play, and on another occasion he spoke with reverence of Hegel's profound proposition about the reality of what is rational.'[2] We say today, that what is rational certainly ought to exist, but cannot simply be said to do so. The cleft between what is and what ought to be seems to us greater, the tragic guilt of power-struggles is therefore heavier than in the old German Idealism, which was not able to represent to itself

[1] *Zehn Jahre deutscher Kämpfe, Auswahl*, pp. 99 ff.
[2] *Deutsche Geschichte*, 4, 484.

the manifestation of God in history as great enough, authoritative or comprehensive enough, and saw even the abysses of life as irradiated by it. Hegel's doctrine about the cunning of reason is clearly having an after-effect again here. But the moral justification of the victory of the strong over the weak could now also be easily misused by those who no longer had the deep moral earnestness and at the same time the intellectual breadth of Treitschke, and could be replaced and coarsened by a Darwinistic naturalism—all the more so when the Nietzschean doctrine of the Superman arrived.

Treitschke himself certainly drew quite fearlessly and sharply the consequences of his basic ideas about the problem of the relation between politics and morals, but he did it with a deep sense of responsibility.[1] Here too we shall find subjective and objective idealism interwoven together. In agreement with subjective idealism he rejected the overstrained concept of the State which came from antiquity and was also held by Hegel, and rejected all the more (as we have already seen) Machiavelli's pure doctrine of power, which was held by him to be empty. Morality does not disappear in the State, the State is not omnipotent, the Christian world has recognized the right of conscience, the State (considered as a great institution for the education of the human race) is *subject* to the moral law. But now objective idealism begins to intervene, and to assert the ideas of identity and individuality is characteristic of the German intellectual tradition. There certainly exist (he says) innumerable conflicts between politics and positive law, since the latter can be or can become irrational. But it would be an intellectual error to talk simply about collisions between morality and politics. In politics there are only conflicts of moral duties, such as every man has to deal with. It is therefore a question of ascertaining the moral law which is unconditionally valid for the State. The stress of personal freedom forms part of full morality in the Christian sense. In the last resort it is always a question, when judging the conflicts of duties that arise therein, whether anyone recognizes his own most personal being and has developed it to the highest degree of completion that it is capable of attaining. Now since the essence of the State is power, so it is also the highest duty of the State to foster this power. 'To maintain itself, is an absolutely moral duty for it.'

Thus we see here that the moral right to individual self-realization is simply transferred from the individual to the State. This was justified in itself, as will later be shown in more detail. But, at the same time, Treitschke overlooked one thing. In the case of supra-individual collective personalities, such as the State, moral action is much more obscure, more complicated and problematic, than in the case of in-

[1] *Politik*, 1, 87 ff.; cf. also *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3, 718.

dividual personalities.[1] Moral responsibility is not concentrated in one individual mind, but must be borne by the collective unit, although the collective unit can only act through the medium of the individual statesman. This dilemma produces an essentially different structure in the moral conduct of the individual and that of the State. Experience shows that the purely moral sense is weakened, in so far as collective things and purposes have to be dealt with. In doubtful instances the moral responsibility sits more lightly upon the agent, because one takes the view that 'the business' requires one to act in a manner in which the individual would neither act nor find it permissible to act. This process first begins to operate, when a merchant, in the interests of his business, subordinates his personal moral needs to his commercial instinct. All action directed towards supra-individual goals therefore has a tendency towards matter-of-factness, but at the same time it has a frightful tendency towards cold heartlessness. We do not say this for sentimental reasons, but in order to demonstrate the tragic character of historical life. For Treitschke too (and one could not expect anything else of him) also recognized and spoke of the tragic guilt which was inevitable in all action. But, by blurring the difference between personal and collective action, he made far too little of the dark shadow which hangs particularly over the conduct of supra-personal entities. For, under the cloak of 'matter-of-factness', it was possible for all kinds of passions and impulses, on the part of whoever was called upon to act for the community, to pour out unnoticed; and (as we explained in the Introduction) action in power politics was particularly subject to this temptation. One also sees now, how fatal it was for Treitschke himself to have restricted the essence of the State to power alone. A more comprehensive idea of the essence of the State would have saved him from taking the exaggerated view that concern for its own power was 'absolutely moral' and took precedence, as a *moral* task, over all its other obligations. The concern for power really belongs much more to the elemental and natural aspect of life and the State. When the State strives after power, it is not acting in any moral manner whatsoever; on the contrary, its action is quite elemental and derives from an absolutely inevitable natural necessity. It is *possible* for this striving to be moral, if the power is intended to be used to preserve moral qualities, but even then it never quite loses its natural basic character.

What else, then, was this special public morality which Treitschke advocated but an after-effect of the Hegelian doctrine of the superior morality of the State, and (in the last resort) of the Hegelian requirement that mind and nature should be identified? All the weaknesses of

[1] The credit of having suggested this belongs to Ernst Troeltsch, *Privatmoral und Staatsmoral* in *Deutsche Zukunft*, 1916.

Treitschke's doctrine of power (and we do not need to examine them all separately here) are due to the fact that he was too eager to interpret natural things and processes as being moral, and altogether used the predicate 'moral' much too lavishly. It was clumsy and dangerous to say: 'The justice of war is based quite simply on the consciousness of a moral necessity.' [1] It is possible to be convinced (as we are) of the natural necessity and inevitability of war, and yet consider it a moral duty to restrict and diminish this necessity, as far as the infirmity of human nature will allow. The same is true of the conflicts between *raison d'état* and the moral command.

In spite of his dangerous theory, Treitschke did possess this high and strict sense of responsibility, because he was a deeply moral man. Although he would never have wished that wars should cease altogether, he did nevertheless wish 'on irresistible moral and economic grounds' that wars should be shorter and less serious. He condemned frivolous wars, just as he condemned frivolous breach of treaties or any other instance of complete unscrupulousness in politics. 'A State that set out to despise faith and loyalty on principle, would continually be threatened by enemies, and therefore would entirely fail to attain its purpose of being a physical power.' [2] The moralizing treatment of political power-struggles which he consistently favoured makes it abundantly clear that he valued power, not for the sake of power, but for the sake of the moral ends which it was to serve; and that this doctrine, which he expressed repeatedly, reached down to the very depths of his being. The exaggerated tendency to introduce an ethical element into the power politics of States (to which this view led) sprang from one of those decisions of the will, to which subjective idealism (as we have already seen in the case of Fichte) was particularly prone. In the case of Fichte, the decision of the will, which led him to Machiavelli, was sudden and ephemeral, born of the great need of his Fatherland. In the case of Treitschke, it became a lasting and constituent element. This resulted from the whole development of the century in which he grew up. A race, filled with a profound belief in the divine reason inherent in history, found itself faced with the task of satisfying once and for all a long-felt need of the Fatherland, and establishing the national power-State. This belief also cast a radiance upon power in the State which excessively transfigured it. But if this was a mistake, then it was the kind of mistake that arouses respect. Certainly those decadent critics of this error who came after and who substituted a crude naturalism and biologism for its idealistic principles, will not arouse any respect.

[1] *Politik*, 2, 553.

[2] *Ibid.*, 2, 544; *Verurteilung der Eroberungspolitik u. a. Aufsätze*, 1, 83; 3, 473 ff.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

PAST AND PRESENT

DURING the nineteenth century, and even today, the expression *raison d'état* is very seldom used.[1] In many ways it only has a meaning which is narrowly restricted from a historical point of view, and it is used to describe the particular spirit of seventeenth-century power politics. It is least used by the very science which stands most in need of the central concept of *raison d'état*—namely, the general theory of the State. Nevertheless the thing itself has by no means died out, and has continued to live on in another terminology, both in a practical and a theoretical manner. The problem of power, power politics, the idea of the power-State—these are the expressions used today instead; and these expressions are acceptable, although they do not succeed in bringing out so clearly the innermost essence of the thing, that vital artery of the State, simultaneously rational and natural, and progressing always from the natural to the spiritual. It was with the reservation that one must always remain conscious of this essence, that we too have made use of the expression, the idea of the power-State.

We have characterized its most significant advocates in nineteenth-century Germany; and (in accordance with the plan of the book) we refrain from presenting the working out of the idea amongst second-rate minds and public opinion in general, valuable as such an exposition would certainly be. But a separate book would be needed if one were to do this, and all the more so if one wanted to reproduce the corresponding

[1] Even in Bismarck, the master of modern *raison d'état*, one seldom meets the expression; but when one does it is in its full sense. When in 1877 the Emperor Wilhelm aroused Bismarck's displeasure by his imprudent political remarks to Gontaut-Biron, and then defended himself by saying that no monarch could allow himself to be restricted in his conversational intercourse with foreigners, Bismarck wrote on the margin: 'But yes, on account of *raison d'état*.' *Grosse Politik der europ. Kabinette*, I, 321 f. Bismarck explained Harry v. Arnim's policy as being due 'not so much to *raison d'état*' as to personal intrigues against himself, *ibid.*, 3, 407. All the more frequently Bismarck speaks about the 'interests' of States as being the motive springs of politics.

intellectual movement in other countries.[1] One would not only need to depict the fateful movement in Germany as a whole, and the corresponding chauvinism among neighbouring peoples; it would also be necessary to show the remarkable and penetrating influence of Nietzsche, who, though he always looked upon the State as a cold monster, nevertheless sang a solemn paean to power and the men of power. The whole of this is connected too with all the changes in modern life and with the various intellectual out-pourings, most of all with the general problem of modern Nationalism; only the comprehensive analysis of the latter would remove the trio Treitschke, Nietzsche, Bernhardi from the hateful glare and agitation and show it in the light of historical truth. From Machiavellism to Nationalism—this could be described as the theme of the whole sinister development of which we have tried to clarify the earlier stages. Historical thought has been forced into new paths by the cataclysm of the World War, with all its consequences. We will venture at least to draw attention to one, where a new insight can be attained by comparing past and present.

We have seen that the German theories, dealt with in the last few chapters, incorporated *raison d'état* into a world-picture seen on idealistic lines, and while daring to mitigate the frightful ensuing consequence of Machiavellism, and the breach with justice and moral custom, did not quite dare to excuse this consequence. Now these German theories were at the same time weapons which the German spirit had forged for itself in order to establish the national State; and they derived from what was, taken as a whole, an optimistic view of the world—something that we have characterized as a need for identity, which also liberates the kind of force that continually desires evil and continually produces good. The doctrine of the cunning of reason was founded on the abysses of historical life.

Right up to the very eve and during the earliest period of the World War, our historical thought continued to be influenced by the after-effects of this mood, although dark shadows had already begun to fall across it. From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, there was a complete change in all the relationships of life, State and community, economics, technics and mental outlook; and this attained an increasingly swift development which, while it forced higher and higher what one calls civilization, nevertheless threatened to become dangerous for what one calls culture—indeed dangerous even for State and community, in spite of all the superficially dazzling progress of their development. And *raison d'état* (taken in the sense of the will to power and to life on the part of the States) thereby acquired an entirely new

[1] The treatment of this theme by G. Büscher, *Die Vergiftung des Geistes als Ursache des Krieges und der Revolution*, 1922, is harsh and unsatisfactory.

environment, in which it—the constant companion and guide of all State activity—was also capable of developing new and unsuspected consequences.

Let us look back therefore at its earlier consequences. They had always been simultaneously constructive and dissolvent. It had built up, not only the power, but also the efficient machinery of the modern State. It had helped to build up the modern mind, and had furthered the agnosticism, utilitarianism and rationalization of modern man. But it was here that its constructive tendencies began to have a dissolvent effect, in that it weakened the building power of morality and made men spiritually hard and cold. This daemonic influence had always to be counterbalanced by other ideal forces—to begin with, the religious idea, afterwards the humaniarian idea of the Enlightenment, and then finally modern individualism with its new ethical content and the new ideals of the State after the end of the eighteenth century, ideals which set new and more meaningful tasks before the State and taught it a respect for cultural values which were not those of the State. The old game of rational politics of interest and the extension of power still went on at the same time; but it was kept within bounds by the factual conditions of earlier centuries.

It was always dependent upon the resources of power, furnished by the social, economic and technical situation. We divide it into three epochs. The first, that of growing absolutism, lasted until about the middle of the seventeenth century; the second, that of mature absolutism, lasted until the French Revolution; and the third, that in which the modern national States grew up, lasted until the fall of Bismarck. At the same time, the resources of power increased and multiplied from one epoch to another. But what is common to all three epochs is the predominantly agrarian background, supplemented by urban manufacture which, in the third epoch, begins to grow into modern industrialism and capitalism.

The agrarian State, organized on feudal territorial lines, was the basis—and in many ways a precarious basis—for absolutism as it began to grow. States were still relatively weak from an external point of view; internally, they were not yet secure in the face of the spirit of feudal and aristocratic autonomy, or from the danger that the domestic opposition parties would unite with the country's enemies. Rohan, who actually did this, subsequently gave the advice that one ought not to fortify too many cities, because it would only make them arrogant and unreliable; and he suggested that foreign wars should be carried on, in order to divert the ambition of the nobles. These wars, carried on with small armies of mercenaries brought together with difficulty and only for the duration of the war, were seldom capable of leading to swift and decisive results and thereby clearing the political air. The consequence

was that war went on (so to speak) during peacetime, that war and peace were not sharply differentiated, but on the contrary tended to overlap. This produced the remarkable phenomenon during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that, instead of a definite peace being signed, States often agreed only upon a truce for several years; that, during peacetime, one still went on conspiring secretly with the opposition elements in a neighbouring country; that hostilities often broke out without any declaration of war, and could be carried on for a long time without breaking off diplomatic relations; that ambassadors plotted in peacetime against the State to which they were accredited, and yet sometimes continued to remain in the country after war was declared, thus serving the interests of war in peacetime and of peace during wartime. It was because men were not strong enough to reach their aims by the great decisive events of war, that they had recourse to all the possible smaller means. Thus war went on smouldering secretly during peace; whilst on the other hand open war, because it was capable of dragging on for years without any result, allowed many kinds of peaceful trade to continue at the same time.[1] All this made men accustomed to war and made war bearable for them, however frightful its affect might be on the native populations in the actual theatres of war. The general security was not so great, but for this very reason men were more accustomed to danger, and did not feel so strongly about the general encroachments on the condition of peace. People complained, understandably enough, about the arbitrary marches made through neutral territory, and camps pitched there; but these occurred frequently enough, without any redress—chiefly on the soil of the German Empire, whose weakness was taken advantage of by neighbouring powers. This confusion of war and peace, the result of the smaller power-resources of the States, explains the lesser degree of sanctity accorded to obligations of international law; but it also explains the greater unscrupulousness, the cruder and more obvious sins committed by *raison d'état* and Machiavellism, which developed especially during this period. But just as it was characteristic of the beginning of this period that Machiavelli came to the fore, so it was characteristic of the end of the period that Hugo Grotius appeared, and began to distinguish more clearly the law of war and peace, and give a greater sanctity to international law.

At the same time there continued to live on here (as we specially noticed in his case) the traditions of a Christian and Western solidarity; and hence these traditions were kept alive at the back of the statesmen's minds, because the actual power-resources were not cap-

[1] The classic examples of all this are provided by the relations between England and Spain under Elizabeth and Philip II before the outbreak of their colonial war, and between Holland and Spain during the great war.

able of destroying the balance of power among the nations by setting up a universal monarchy.

They even continued to live on in the background when the power-resources of the States grew considerably during the period of mature absolutism. This happened through the establishing of standing armies, which in turn was closely connected with the suppression of the feudal and aristocratic opposition, with the politics of mercantile economics and the newly-acquired opportunities for taxation. Within the States this caused a sharper differentiation between the conditions of peace and war. The State now became more strictly policed, and this caused the general security of the population to increase. The division between the professional armies and the military calling on the one hand, and the peaceful subjects on the other hand, became more rigid; this happened even when the free enlistment into the army began to be supplemented by compulsory recruiting, for then the recruited men were changed into professional soldiers. Even in the relations between States, this ambiguity between peace and war began to diminish; the rights of neutrals were better respected, though still not by any means completely so. It is most important to notice that, from the point of view of power politics, the differences between the separate States increased, and the larger and largest States continued to grow more powerful relatively. At this time, the world of Italian States resembles a group of small extinct volcanoes, which were no longer capable of pursuing a forceful policy of *raison d'état*. A new group of small active volcanoes did indeed appear at the beginning of this period, when the *miles perpetuus* came into being, in the armed Imperial Provinces of Germany; but after the beginning of the eighteenth century they declined once more when the one that was more powerful and had more future than any of them, the State of Brandenburg-Prussia, began to become a great power. The situation is dominated more and more completely by the activities of power politics. Even the methods of statecraft are displaced. *Raison d'état* certainly does not become basically any more moral or less unscrupulous; but the smaller and cruder recipes of Machiavellism are more seldom used, because men possess better and stronger power-resources. We may recall Richelieu's observation that the large States kept their agreements better than the small ones, because they were obliged to look after their reputation—one is forced to add, because it was also easier for the large States to make a practice of keeping them. If Frederick the Great had been the strongest ruler in Europe, even he would probably have developed a stricter theory and practice in the matter of keeping treaties. The end of the period produced an almost artificially balanced separation and division of labour between war and peace, military affairs and the life of the people, power politics and peaceful civilian culture. They seemed to move

along side by side, without really coming in contact or disturbing each other. The civilian would hardly notice when the territorial ruler was carrying on a war; the severely disciplined armies were forbidden to carry out requisitioning. In general, the wars were wars of attrition, and not of annihilation. On the whole, strategy sought as far as possible to substitute the bloodless manœuvre for the bloody battle. If, in the earlier period, both war and peace had trespassed on each other's ground, now war and peace as such were more rigidly separated, but war was curbed by statecraft and military skill, so that it acquired something of the character of peace. And the rationalists approved of this situation which was convenient for civil life and had overcome the barbarism of earlier centuries. The dualism in Frederick the Great's political thought also reflects very faithfully this artificially separated juxtaposition of the sphere of controlled *raison d'état* and the sphere of universal human reason. But this triumph of statecraft and military skill really only succeeded in making a virtue of necessity. Power politics adopted these artificial and conventional limitations, because the resources of the States still continued to be very restricted, and made it necessary to adopt a certain economy in one's behaviour.

This was later shown when the doors sprang open which had hitherto prevented the peoples from taking a share in power politics. The social upheaval of the revolutionary period created entirely new possibilities for power politics. The division of the community into classes, though politically it had been held in check by mature absolutism, had nevertheless been permitted to continue from a social point of view; by its continued existence it set limits to the further development of State power, both inside and outside the country. It made it impossible to raise the mass armies of conscription and universal military service, to which the French Revolution now gave birth. The power politics of Napoleon I could now set up goals for itself, which would have been quite unattainable for a Louis XIV or Frederick the Great; and Napoleon's own boundless will to power was simultaneously putting into effect the will to power of a nation that had attained to a supreme degree of self-consciousness. One can understand how it was that a contemporary summed up the whole development from 1789 onwards, in the statement that Machiavelli was undergoing a terrible resurrection.[1] In the time of Napoleon I, war and peace were once more mingled together, as in the earlier period, only now in even greater proportions, because the richer resources of power permitted an excess.

But they were drawn apart once again by the restoration of the old State system. Henceforth *raison d'état* exercised its powers more moderately and cautiously once again, because the ruling personalities

[1] Mazères, *De Machiavel et de l'influence de sa doctrine sur les opinions, les mœurs et la politique de la France pendant la Revolution*, 1816.

had reason to fear the daemonic forces of the depths which they had seen unfettered. The interests of conservative solidarity were in part closely connected (as we have shown in our earlier book) with a Christian universalist and ethical ideology, which consciously restricted the pure impulse to power. Corresponding to the domestic policy of reaction, with its exaggeratedly anxious attitude, most countries now adopted a foreign policy of European peace, which was able to avoid great world conflicts, because men were heavily enough engaged in coming to terms with the new national, liberal and democratic tendencies. But the new power-impulses inherent in these, and the new sources of power which they opened up, remained alive and led on to the great re-shaping of Europe during the period of Bismarck. In Bismarck we see the most sublime and successful synthesis between the old *raison d'état* of the cabinet, and the new popular forces. He made use of these for the power-needs of the Prussian State, satisfied them by setting up the constitutional national State, and yet simultaneously kept both these forces and his own power politics within firm bounds, well calculated and carefully maintained. With Machiavellian ruthlessness and the most acute calculation and exploitation of power-resources, he created the German State; but the same calculation also enabled him to see the limits of the power of which Germany was capable. An intimate connection exists here between his suppression of parliamentary and democratic tendencies, and his cautious moderate power-policy after 1871, which constantly strove to maintain peace in Europe. He was deeply convinced of the fact that responsibility to parliaments made it difficult for statecraft to pursue the right paths and avoid risky undertakings.[1] He considered it a risky undertaking for Germany to adopt a power-policy which went beyond the maintenance of the position of power attained in 1871. On the other hand, he also viewed parliamentary control of the cabinet as a beneficial stimulus, tending to restrict the power-policy of the State purely to protecting its own properly-understood interests.[2] Certainly his suppression of liberalism and socialism (an action for which foreign policy was by no means the least significant of motives) did involve him in the tragic and two-edged necessity of restricting by force certain growing powers of development.

[1] From among the countless instances in the publication *Die grosse Politik der europ. Kabinette*, here is only one from 1887 (5, 195): 'The foreign policy of a great empire cannot be placed at the beck and call of a parliamentary majority without being forced into wrong paths.'

[2] 'Under the present-day parliamentary conditions of all countries, a regard for public responsibility even in the continental States tends to *make the rulers more cautious than they used to be* and reduces the possibility that the resources of the country may be applied, in accordance with a whim of the government, to support interests other than those of the nation itself.' Instruction to Hatzfeldt, 9th Dec. 1885, *loc. cit.*, 4, 142.

But he also had a most subtle and gifted sense for the fact that the power politics of modern monarchical States was treading on quite different and incomparably more dangerous ground than it had done in earlier centuries; and that there were subterranean forces eagerly awaiting an opportunity to break loose, if statecraft were to take one false step. Today (he said to the Tsar in the historic conversation of 18th November 1887), more than in any other historical epoch, it is in the interests of the great monarchies to avoid war.[1] This was not merely a tactical appeal to the Russian autocrat, on the contrary it was also an organic principle with him. In adopting it, he was taking up once again the healthy basis of Metternich's policy during the Restoration period, without lapsing into its doctrinaire narrowness of viewpoint and attitude of fear. If it had not been for him, the old European world would perhaps have collapsed a few decades earlier.[2]

Thus, in the century between 1815 and 1914, war and peace were more sharply differentiated from one another. If war broke out, it never spread to a general European conflict; yet it tended more and more to be fought out with the more powerful means which were made available by the nationalization of States and universal military service. Generally speaking, therefore, they were not long-winded wars of attrition, but swift, short, intensive wars to defeat the enemy. War in itself became more intensive than earlier on, but peace also became more intensive and complete. Never were the frontiers of States opened to each other in a more liberal manner, never was international trade easier, never was the freedom of the world-traveller greater than in the last fifty years before the Great War. The development of international law was assisted by an increasingly subtle and closely-woven net of international agreements; and at the same time these helped to reinforce the idea of international law, which during the previous centuries had to a certain extent come to provide a counterpart and alternative for the idea of *raison d'état*. And so it happened that, within this period and in view of all the other economic and technical achievements, it was possible for the same kind of cultural optimism to develop, the same kind of hope for everlasting 'improvement', as at the close of the *ancien régime*, when war seemed to have lost its violent character. This cultural optimism was of a quite different and much more banal kind than that other idealistic optimism which sprang from the need for identity on the part of the German spirit, and, even after the decline of the philosophy of identity, continued to exercise a predominating influence in German historical thought. In any case it was possible for both kinds of optimism working together to produce a sure feeling of

[1] *Loc. cit.*, 5, 323.

[2] Jakob Burckhardt already had a certain feeling for this, as is shown by his letters to Preen; cf. pp. 225 and 259.

confidence in a sane and tranquil continuance of development for Western humanity. But this confidence was founded once again (although this was not always quite clearly understood) on the assumption that power politics, the *raison d'état* of the large States, would not always be bound to pursue peaceful paths; but that, if it should decide on war, then it would always be restrained by rational bounds, would curb itself, and would respect the conditions necessary for the continued existence of Western culture and civilization.

But, as we have indicated, this confident mood had already been darkened for some time past by gloomy shadows. We must now consider for a moment the whole problem of modern universal culture. There is no need to examine its development in detail, but only to recall the principal points. Did the economic revolution, which turned the agrarian States into the great capitalist industrial States, perhaps in the long run bring more harm than good upon humanity? Was it possible that the utilitarianism, produced by modern large-scale manufacture, dried up the springs of genuine and vital intellectual culture? Was the latter not perhaps also threatened by the levelling influence of democracy and the whole dead weight of mechanized mass-life? These were questions and doubts which appeared very early in the camp of conservative reaction, but were also taken up and examined more profoundly by such an independent historical thinker as Jakob Burckhardt. If only all these prejudiced and unprejudiced critics of the modern development had been able to provide a means of stopping the irresistible and elemental process. They were unquestionably right in thinking that the moderately industrialized agrarian State, with its hierarchical structure of the community, had offered more favourable conditions for the living preservation of intellectual culture, than did the large-scale capitalist and democratic industrial State. But one would have had to restrict the increase in population, in order to be able to retain the agrarian State and the good old times. Any reflection which was to be useful must far rather consider the question of how one could meet this elemental and unalterable fate which was hanging over us—how one could meet it with the weapons of reason, how one could alter the Natural by means of the Intellectual—uncertain whether it would succeed, and yet undespairing. It was the old struggle between freedom and necessity, between *virtù* and *fortuna*, which Western humanity now had to fight out once again, but this time in the most enormous proportions. To recognize the Natural as given, to remain conscious of the obscure basis that supported and nourished it, but to develop it into the forms which the human mind required from its own autonomous depths, and yet at the same time always to be on the watch lest the Natural break through once more and destroy the work of culture, but constantly experiencing all the while new manifestations

of the mind too—this and no other was the conclusion of the problem of *raison d'état*, which we have traced down the centuries. But what was the situation now, in which *raison d'état* found itself amidst the new environment of the most modern vital forces? What was the effect upon it of the re-fashioning of living relationships?

That type of *raison d'état* which predominated generally during the nineteenth century and of which Bismarck was the highest and best example had been able (as we have seen) to make a sharp distinction between war and peace, to leave long resting periods of deep peace in between the explosions of war, and thus leave room for the freest unfolding of all the historical forces of the nineteenth century. It was this unfolding of forces that produced the enormously increased power-resources, by the help of which it was capable of bringing any war that had to be entered upon to a swift conclusion. And indeed the power politics of large States was now served by three powerful auxiliary forces, which either sprang from the womb of the century or else were essentially fashioned and strengthened by it. The names of these three forces were militarism, nationalism and capitalism. In the first instance, they brought the large States to a summit of power and capability such as they had never attained before; but in the last resort they also aroused temptations which would never have existed for the *raison d'état* of earlier times, which was working with more modest power-resources. The very restrictedness of the power-resources had been the means of salvation to European humanity and ultimately even to the State itself, and had constantly warded off the hypertrophy of power. Now its apparent unrestrictedness became destiny. Let us take a summary of this.

On account of the introduction of universal military service, militarism (which was the oldest of the three forces) grew deeply involved with the life of the people, and thereby acquired incommensurable physical and moral powers. Universal military service made it possible for the State to extend its power further and further, until finally (as happened in the Great War) the nation was driven to make the most extreme sacrifices. But the greater the tension became, the stronger also was the reaction on the nations that were beaten and physically exhausted. Nowadays, to lose a war meant something different for a great power from what it had meant previously. Looked at from a present-day point of view, the treaties of the eighteenth century, and even (apart from the intermezzo of Napoleon I) of the nineteenth century, all still possessed a certain character of coming to terms. Peace was concluded when the point was reached where a definite amount of force had been exerted, beyond which it was not possible or desirable to go. Provinces might be lost, but the States with the larger territories and populations still maintained the character of great powers. Now, however, it was a question of being a great power or not being one.

Originally (in the form in which it was permanently organized by Boyen in Prussia in 1814) the idea of universal military service was a defensive idea, a means of self-defence adopted by the weaker of the great powers against those that were more overpowering and better endowed by nature. Its success led to it being universally adopted on the continent, produced a general armaments race and turned it into an offensive weapon of politics.

It is not however possible to understand this change without linking it up with other developmental processes. War, which was based on universal military service, came to be characterized as a people's war, a national war. The instincts and passions of entire peoples now flowed into war and politics. On account of universal military service and the other achievements of liberalism, the State now became a national State; and as such it was possible and necessary for it to set itself aims which were more far-reaching and meaningful than the goals of the great power-State of earlier centuries, which had been governed by rulers and cabinets. Unity between people and State became the aim striven for by the national ideal, which was mounting up to what one calls Nationalism. This meant that the possibilities for friction in European politics were imperceptibly increased. How very wrong those people were, who had hoped that war would be diminished if the people took a share in State activity, or if (as Kant expressed it) States became republicanized.[1] Hitherto a conquered State had only reason to regret the loss of provinces, a reduction in its calculable power-resources. Henceforth one had to bemoan the loss of brothers and friends, and this loss was quite incalculable. And the Eastern Question, which up to the middle of the nineteenth century had been nothing more than a question of power and a test for political calculation between the great powers (and therefore was always capable of being settled fairly tolerably), now took on its full virulence and dangerousness for Europe, on account of the national aspirations (now no longer controllable) of the Balkan nations that were becoming conscious of themselves.

It was essentially these irredentist passions on the part of the nations which changed universal military service from the defensive weapon it

[1] Spinoza already believed this. *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, ch. 18, and *Tract. politicus*, ch. 7, § 5. And even the pacifism of the post-war period clung to this illusion. The Norwegian Lange, *Hist. de l'internationalisme*, I, 1919, p. 483, says *que dans la démocratie il y a une garantie de paix, parce qu'il existe entre les peuples une solidarité des intérêts, qui n'a jamais uni et ne peut jamais unir les dynasties et les oligarchies.* As against this, cf. Burckhardt's *Briefe an Preen*, p. 117 (1878): 'Ever since politics has been founded on internal ferments of the nations, all certainty is at an end', and on p. 218 (1887): 'The things that are done by the so-called peoples, i.e. by the rabid minorities with their newspapers, are quite as bad as the worst wars of the old cabinet-politics.'

had originally been, into an offensive weapon that threatened world peace. It must be clearly understood that the general adoption of universal military service contained in itself possibilities for peace as well as for war. It was no mere empty phrase, when the German government, at every increase in the army between 1871 and 1914, emphasized not only the peaceful intentions of these increases but also their peaceful effect, and pointed out that a strong armament was the best guarantee of peace. It is a basic law of power politics that any weak State, incapable of defending itself by its own strength (whether its weakness is the result of incomplete development, lack of physical resources or internal confusion), is in danger of becoming a passive object, a hunting ground, a region of low political pressure, into which the winds of power may blow from neighbouring territories and cause a storm to get up. Everything that is weak and insecure arouses the greed of a stronger neighbour; and not only the crude desire for conquest, but also purified *raison d'état*, the sober consideration of one's own safety and future, the need for the balance of power, are capable of forcing the stronger neighbours to concern themselves with the destinies of the sick man living amongst them, and to participate in the sharing out of his inheritance. On account of the fact, then, that during the nineteenth century Germany and Italy both recovered and, ceasing to be passive, became active agents in major politics, Europe became consolidated and pacified in the interval between 1871 and 1914 to an extent which it had scarcely yet achieved in modern history. If everywhere in the world strength dwelt side by side with strength, and no weak and decadent spot remained amongst them, then it would in fact be a supreme pledge of world peace. But it is certainly true that the standard of an equivalent development of power is never attained everywhere simultaneously; and if it does seem to be attained, then the surging of life always tries to disturb it again. Now, after centuries of conflict, Western and Central Europe seemed to be pacified, and even the weaker States there were protected by the balance of power between the rival great powers; but at this moment the contagiousness of national aspirations produced the result that the old source of trouble in the Balkans was joined by the great new trouble-spot of Austria-Hungary. It was this new complication that first caused the race in military armaments on the part of the great powers to become so dangerous for world peace. It was this that caused the other sources of conflict in Europe (some of which were already healed, while others were slowly healing up)—Poland, South Tyrol, Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium—to break out in sympathy and blaze up once again.

Thus it happened that modern militarism, which combined a spirit of military vocation with universal military service, came to constitute a real danger of war for the whole of Europe—not only because of itself

alone, but really only because of the addition of modern nationalism and the new areas of low pressure which it created. But to these was added a third great dynamic force which heightened them and simultaneously created entirely new methods and tasks for the competition between nations and great powers. This was modern capitalism. Militarism and nationalism by themselves were certainly capable of causing a general European war, somewhat of the type of the Napoleonic Wars, only carried on with more powerful forces. But the previous character of the European State system would certainly still have been preserved in the process, even if the Austro-Hungarian monarchy had gone to pieces. Germany and Russia would probably have been able to maintain themselves as great powers, and Europe would have remained the strong heart of the world. But now modern capitalism produced the result that Europe and its great powers were first able to develop a monstrous and unheard-of degree of material accomplishment, and then, overflowing with strength and energy, entered into conflict with one another, and deployed and exerted everything possible until a complete collapse of the European organism was achieved. Militarism, nationalism, capitalism—one cannot blame any single one of these three for having brought us to grief. It was only the fateful conjunction of the three (a conjunction entirely understandable in itself (that first caused the European great powers to attain the summit of their power, and then led them into an abyss, which could even prove fatal yet to the victors of Europe.

It was through the growth of large-scale industry and the stimulation of the spirit of discovery that capitalism first placed the powerful new technical methods of war at the disposal of power politics. It was these that made it possible to aim at offensive and defensive achievements that had never before been attainable. Previously it had been possible for a single day's fighting to decide the fate of a war, and the available forces had been expended in a small number of battles. But now the battles were innumerable, and even the side that was repeatedly vanquished could always go on hoping to recover with the help of the technical consequences of a war of position. But this very hope proved a deceptive will o' the wisp for a power that was weaker in total resources, and tempted it gradually to gamble everything it had on this risky undertaking, until bankruptcy was the final result. In earlier times military resources were more restricted; and this (as we must always be repeating) also restricted politics. But the greater wealth of military resources became a curse. Moreover the increase in the human resources of war, in universal military service, was also partly a result of capitalism. For only the large-scale manufacture and export industry could have made it possible to amass such enormous numbers of men on this same European soil. Europe had become soaked full like a sponge with

wealth and men; and so, when the iron dice was thrown, Europe succumbed to the dangerous temptation of staking everything, until it was bled white.

Capitalism had also produced a large part of the new goals for which men were fighting. In addition to the nationalist goals, lying inside the old Europe, there were now also the imperialistic goals, situated outside Europe, and which were based on the expansion of the home capitalism, and ultimately on the over-population of Europe. And this over-population created a social structure which was so sensitive that the military collapse was bound to lead to a social collapse, and thereby also to the end of the old type of monarchy. Thus war in general, that last and strongest instrument of *raison d'état*, was no longer what it had been calculated to be; it had become a daemonic force which scorned the rein of *raison d'état* and threw its rider in the abyss. Power had overflowed its banks. The passions and ambitions of the people were united with the tempting new military resources to create the ominous atmosphere in which the pure and cautious type of statecraft could no longer flourish. The struggles between the government and the high command, between Bethmann-Hollweg, Kühlmann and Ludendorff during the war, are symbolical of the weakness of position which the principal statesman is bound to feel in modern warfare under any circumstances, even if he is made of stronger stuff than Bethmann was. Even a principal statesman who is stronger is still subject to forces which he can certainly increase and strengthen, but is no longer capable of guiding. In 1923 I asked a famous English historian, who disapproved of the forceful French policy after the war, whether Lloyd George had not committed a gross error against the classical old English policy of the balance of power, when he left Germany so completely helpless. He replied: 'But in view of the mood of the English people at that time, Lloyd George simply *could not* act any differently.' An obscure popular necessity triumphed over the clear necessity of State. Looking back now, we can see the whole greatness of Bismarck's achievement in the 'eighties, when, in the most difficult situation, he conducted the successful struggle of purified *raison d'état* against the different nationalisms of the world, and delayed the catastrophe which was going to fall on Europe.

It was owing to the weakness of the power-resources of all States, that war and peace had tended to intermingle during the first period of modern history. The strength of the power-resources which France obtained through the Treaty of Versailles brought it out once again that (as during the time of Napoleon, and temporarily also of Louis XIV) war continued during peacetime, and a terrible situation of confusion between war and peace was created. The reason for this was the imagined *raison d'état* of the French, who were conscious that their victory had

not been achieved by their own strength, who feared the nation of 60 millions that they had for a neighbour, and who wanted to eliminate the excess of 20 millions by a series of shattering blows against the structure of our nation and State. But the exaggerated anxiety for their own future safety was combined with the restless need for prestige of an ambitious nation, and now threatened to produce severe new world-crises, which could become dangerous even for France herself. Whether the counter-stream of calmer and more moderate tendencies that set in with the Parliamentary Elections of 11th May 1924 will last very long, is something which cannot yet be decided today. But this fresh example shows once again the daemonic forces which are capable of developing in *raison d'état*. They are capable of operating alongside and together with the most subtle utilitarian technique of statecraft. France especially, side by side with the most conscious fostering of the diplomatic art, reveals in its national life the worst excesses of *raison d'état*—the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Reunions, the September Massacre, the *coups* of Napoleon I. And the way in which the modern forces of militarism, nationalism and capitalism are standing behind the *raison d'état* of Poincaré's France and bring it to boilting point, is only too clear.

Thus today the idea of *raison d'état* (like many another idea of Western culture) is in the middle of a severe crisis. The natural basis of elemental passions which it possesses and which cannot (as we said in the Introduction) be subdued solely by its utilitarian middle ground, makes a more terrible impression today than ever before; and the civilizing achievements of the modern world tend rather to exaggerate it than restrict it. All the ways in which the modern State has become enriched by successive influxes of liberal, democratic, national and social forces and ideas (and which hitherto we have tended to regard as pure enrichment and increase) have now shown their other face, and have brought *raison d'état* into contact with forces which it is no longer capable of controlling. It is no longer (as Ranke regarded it) the guiding principle, the leader and director of State existence, which, even when it fights and overthrows its adversaries, awakens new life there, or at least concedes it. Its destructive consequences threaten far rather to exceed everything which has been experienced hitherto, even under Napoleon I. The pitiless *raison d'état* of the ancient republics seems to have come to life—a *raison d'état* that could not even endure the mere existence of an adversary that had once been dangerous, and which looked upon the complete annihilation of that adversary as its supreme task. It was this, indeed, that destroyed the very nature of the ancient republic itself. So now, too, the character of the modern European State existence threatens to come to grief—that group of free and independent States, which at the same time felt themselves to be one

large family, and amongst which the balance of power was always eventually restored. This would indeed mean that the historical role of Europe, as it has been up to now, was played out, and that Western culture is in fact doomed to destruction.

This is the worst of the possibilities conjured up by the hypertrophy of modern *raison d'état*. It would be hazardous to prophesy that it must necessarily and absolutely be realized in the future. But neither can we subscribe today to the unqualified optimism of Ranke, the confidence (which he expressed in *Die Grossen Mächte*) in the genius which 'had always protected Europe from the domination of any one-sided and violent tendency'. The historical world seems to us more obscure and, with respect to its further progress, more dangerous and uncertain than it did to him and to the generations that believed in the triumph of reason in history. For its nocturnal and natural aspect has imposed itself more forcibly upon our thought and our experience. But the intellect must not leave off the struggle. So the final thing, which still remains to be done, is to take up once again the old question concerning the bounds of *raison d'état*, and present the desirable relationship between politics and morality in the manner in which it derives from the combination of historical investigation and experience. This will take us beyond the frontiers of pure descriptive history; but only after we have first attempted to serve it in a pure and absolute fashion.

* * *

During the Great War, as was bound to happen, the old problem of German thought was profoundly stirred up and put to a new test. Serious and important things were said on the subject at that time, principally by Ernst Troeltsch and Alfred Vierkandt,[1] and the stimulus of these thinkers enters into our investigations too. Nevertheless the atmosphere of the Great War did not yet make it possible to take up an attitude with complete inner freedom towards the tradition of power politics in Germany, and towards the idealist sanctioning of power,

[1] Troeltsch, *Privatmoral und Staatsmoral* in *Deutsche Zukunft*, 1916; Vierkandt, *Machtverhältnis und Machtmoral*, 1916. So also the book, based on strongly moral and religious feeling, by Otto Baumgarten, entitled *Politik und Moral*, 1916; and H. Scholz, *Politik und Moral*, 1915, who puts forward an interpretation that is in some ways too artificial and captious. More along the lines of the ideas we are advocating is Erich Franz, *Politik und Moral*, 1917, and the earlier essay by F. Paulsen, *Politik und Moral*, 1899 (in the *Gesammelte Vorträge und Aufsätze*, vol. 2). The most important of the older German works of research on this subject, the *Kanzlerrede* of Gustav Rümelin (*Reden und Aufsätze* and *Kanzlerreden*) on which even Treitschke lavishes praise (*Politik*, 1, 95), suffers even more than the literature produced during the World War from the after-effects of Hegel, i.e. from a tendency to be too hasty in sanctioning natural processes and viewing them as moral.

which we have traced from Hegel to Treitschke.[1] But even an opposite attempt (quite unhampered by this restriction) to solve this problem on the part of a Christian pacifism, which was undertaken by Friedrich Wilhelm Förster in his Political Ethics of 1918, was bound to fail. Any discussion with him is really impossible, for he does not speak the intellectual language created by German historicism, but on the contrary the language of the old Natural Law of Christian and mediaeval times. Since he has not eaten the apple of historicism, he has not participated in the sinful Fall in which he regards all of us (including Ernst Troeltsch and the author of this book) as being entangled. And he preaches, with a high moral enthusiasm, but also with the exaggeration of a zealot, the doctrine that the State (being entirely dependent on moral forces) must invariably follow the moral law, even if it thereby suffers harm for the moment. But now unfortunately the State is not entirely dependent on moral forces; indeed (as we have shown) it is even more subject to natural laws of existence than the individual man is. And no responsible statesman who accepts Förster's advice to guide the present-day State into a 'Path of Sorrows' will be satisfied with the apocalyptic comfort that his sacrifice will bear fruit 'in the fullness of time and according to eternal laws' (p. 255).

Nevertheless the message of pure Christian idealism, which recognizes no compromise between mind and nature, is always certain to be listened to with seriousness and respect, and a sense of sorrow that the world cannot be altered by it. Even the uncompromising radicalism in this question possesses an inner rightness, since it sharpens the conscience and draws attention to the shortcomings of mere relativism. Of course it too has certain shortcomings; and the permanent undeniable discoveries of historicism could only be surrendered to it at some sacrifice of truth. It is, and will always be, impossible to deny the constraining force of *raison d'état*, which was already recognized by the empiricism of earlier centuries and confirmed by historicism. But since this has led to a breach with the ideas of natural law (to which the Western peoples have always clung) and to the intellectual isolation of Germany, there is a profound need and obligation to carry out a self-examination of historicism; this book is intended to assist in that purpose, which is one however that had already been begun with great force of intellect by the friend to whom the book is dedicated. His work on the problem of historicism and his address, delivered shortly before his death in 1922, on the subject of natural law and humanity in world politics, have paved the way towards a new intellectual understanding between German historical thought and that of the Western peoples—

[1] Today I must also say the same about my own attempt made at this period (*Kultur, Machtpolitik und Militarismus* in *Deutschland und der Weltkrieg* and *Preussen und Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert*).

to be reached at some future time, for (as he very well knew) the gulf could only be bridged by the work of several generations.

Let us recall how the separation arose. The unorganic dualism of the two modes of thought, the political-empirical and that of natural law, which existed in the whole of the West until the end of the eighteenth century, was overcome in Germany by a sublime organic unity of thought. It was the ideas of identity and individuality which together created the new idealism and historicism, and which simultaneously embraced both the heaven and hell, the reality and the ideal in historical life, as necessarily belonging to one another. It was the existence of heaven, which also made it possible to support the existence of hell in the world. But this unity began to slacken once again, when the monistic idea of identity began to slacken, whilst the idea of historical individuality continued to hold good as an indispensable key to the understanding of intellectual and natural phenomena. We may not and must not surrender this; but we can turn away decisively from the critical after-effects of the idea of identity, and thereby attain to a new dualism. But this must not be a mere unorganic juxtaposition of the two modes of thought (as in the West), but must be a unified mode of thought, which is actually dualistic in principle. We lose nothing by this, but rather gain the possibility of reaching a theoretical and practical understanding with the West. We shall only be throwing away the burnt-out clinkers of our own intellectual development, and we shall be keeping the living fire. This can now be demonstrated.

The profound shortcoming of the Western mode of thought (on the lines of natural law) was that, when applied to real State life, it remained a mere dead letter; it did not affect the statesman deeply, it did not hinder the modern hypertrophy of *raison d'état*, and so it only took effect either in confused complaints or doctrinaire postulates, or else in hypocrisy and cant. The profound shortcoming in German historical thought was its tendency to excuse and idealize power politics by the doctrine that it accorded with a superior type of morality. Thus, in spite of all the moral and idealistic reservations that were made, the way was cleared for the establishing of a crudely naturalistic and biological ethics of force.

Only by resolving to view power politics and *raison d'état* in the context of their duality and all their real problematical elements, will it be possible to reach a doctrine that is not only truer, but also better and more moral in its effects. In action prompted by *raison d'état* there is a possibility for innumerable stages of gradual transition between elemental and moral processes. But the doctrine of a special State morality (which even Troeltsch described in 1916 as profound) is misleading. For it only meets an individual instance of a much more universal occurrence, namely the conflict between individual and general

morality. The great discovery of Schleiermacher's generation (in contrast even to Kant's) was to have found and justified the individual element in moral conduct. In every man, and at every moment of his conduct, the universal, pure and strict ideal of morality is faced with a quite individual world, made up of a mixture of natural and intellectual components. This gives rise to conflicts of all kinds, which cannot always be solved in a clear and unambiguous manner. The salvation and maintenance of personal individuality then is quite certainly also a moral right and a moral requirement, if it assists in the salvation of the intellectual element there. But if it succeeds at the expense of the universal moral command, as so often happens, then this is a tragic guilt. It is to be judged with a human freedom, without Pharisaism, but with a strict observance of the universal moral command. For the individual ethic, which wishes to maintain itself against the general ethic, is never (and this must not be overlooked) a pure ethic like the other, but is always essentially blended with egotistical and natural constituents, with the need for power. In order to maintain himself, each individual needs a minimum of power. This (such is the demand of individual ethics) must assist in the intellectual and moral realization of the individual; but that which assists seldom remains purely an assistant, but also wishes to direct, and thus tinges all action according to individual norms with its own natural earth-colour. It is with particular reference to *raison d'état*, to the individual laws for the life of States, that we have shown how this obscure natural basis reaches up as far as the highest and most moral developments of statesmanlike conduct. But one can also demonstrate its existence in all personal conduct according to individual norms.

The recognition of the individual element in ethics has enriched moral life, but has also made it dangerously rich. A complex ethic offers more temptations than did the old simple ethics, even such as that of Kant's Categorical Imperative. In this, in the more general type of ethics, in the universally binding moral law, the divine element in Man speaks to him in a pure and unadulterate manner. In the individual ethic, he can hear it together with the dark undertones of nature. The former is the more sacred and strict; the latter is the more living. For life is nothing else but the inexplicable conjunction of mind and nature, which are causally linked together and yet essentially gape apart. This is the dualistic result which modern thought has achieved after a century of the richest and most severe experience, after it has seen both idealistic and naturalistic monism, both the philosophy of identity and positivism, struggling in vain to explain the picture of the world. Neither can dualism give any explanation; but it can demonstrate the facts in a plainer and more correct fashion than any kind of monism could. Respect for what cannot be analysed and an inborn sense of morality

—these two guiding principles of Ranke's must remain the guiding principles of modern thought; but the veiled dualism, which he used to help himself out and cloak the nocturnal aspect of life, must be stripped of its veil.

To talk about a special State morality leads one into the temptation of following in Hegel's footsteps, and proclaiming State morality as a superior type. In the conflict between politics and morality, the statesman who thinks to save the individuality of the State at the expense of morality, is not acting according to a special State morality, but according to that wider type of individual ethics. The fact that action on behalf of collective individualities brings with it greater temptations than does action on behalf of one's own individuality, is something that we have already shown earlier on in opposition to Treitschke. It depends on the personal manner in which the statesman resolves the conflict in himself between the moral command and State interest, whether his decision in favour of State interest will be held to be a moral act or not—whether the hero, as Ranke said, is justified to himself. But his conduct will still bear an element of tragic guilt.

If we look back now at the whole history of our problem, we discern a remarkable rhythm, an inner dialectic in its development. Machiavelli asserted the boundlessness of *raison d'état* on the basis of a naïvely monistic *Weltanschauung*. The need to find limits for the daemonic natural force of *raison d'état* led to an incomplete and unorganic dualism between the principles of practical empiricism on the one hand, and those of Christianity and natural law on the other. And the Christian ethic, which was the most violently opposed to a limitless *raison d'état*, was also, on its side, fundamentally dualistic. Hegel's monistic and pantheistic philosophy of identity overcame the incompleteness of the former duality, and brought the basis of Machiavelli's doctrine into respect once again. Amongst the after-affects of the philosophy of identity, the special sanctioning of the idea of power remained alive in Germany. Since today we are conscious of the one-sidedness and dangers of this sanctioning, we are instinctively led—*fert unda nec regitur*—towards a new dualism, but one which is striving to be more complete and organic than the previous one. It takes over from monistic thought the part of it that is undeniably correct, the inseparable causal unity between mind and nature; but it holds fast to the equally undeniable and essential difference existing between mind and nature. The unknown quantity X, which serves to explain simultaneously both this unity and this opposition, we shall leave unsolved, because it is insoluble. Later generations may perhaps try once again to attain to a new philosophy of identity,[1] and so the swing of the

[1] Beginnings towards this are already being made today on the basis of the new scientific discoveries. Cf. the interesting essays by Kurt Riezler, *Über das Wunder*

pendulum may continue between dualistic and monistic views of the world. But in any case one thing is certain: that monism, whether it is naïve or conscious, idealistic or naturalistic, must never become the nutritive element for an unrestricted *raison d'état*; but it can become so, if its limitations are sought for in some dualistic manner whether it is followed consciously or unconsciously.

Further consequences can now swiftly be drawn. *Raison d'état*, power politics, Machiavellism and war can never be banished from the world, because they are inseparably bound up with the natural aspect of State life. One must also recognize (something that has always been taught by the German school of history) that power politics and war are not only destructive, but that they are also capable of operating creatively, and that in all kinds of ways good grows out of evil, and what is intellectual springs out of what is elemental. But one must avoid any idealization of this fact. It is not a cunning on the part of reason that it discloses, but rather an incapacity of reason. Reason is incapable of triumphing by her own strength. She certainly brings pure fire from the altar; but what she sets ablaze is not pure flame.

I falter not, though by this act I damn myself, was Goethe's comment on this, and in the face of every manifestation of the divine nature he never forgot its obscure daemonic depths. He knew well that, 'Whoever acts is always unscrupulous.'

Together with the false idealization of power politics, there must also cease the false deification of the State, which has continued in German thought since the time of Hegel, in spite of Treitschke's opposition. Which does not mean to say that one must expel the State from that high range of the values of life, to which it lays claim. For him who embraces and defends everything that is most sacred about the nation—to live and die for it, to work for its spiritualization, to involve his own personal existence with it and thereby increase its real value—those high requirements, which have guided the German spirit since the time when Germany first rose, are all the more valid today, when Germany lies on the ground dishonoured by foreign hands and by its own. The State shall become moral, and strive to achieve harmony with the universal moral law, even when one knows that it can never quite reach its goal, that it is always bound to sin, because hard and natural necessity forces it to do so.

The modern statesman must exert his dual sense of responsibility towards the State and the moral law all the more strongly, because modern civilization has (as we have seen) become more terrible and dangerous for action in accordance with *raison d'état*. Utilitarian and

gültiger Naturgesetze, Dioskuren II, and *Die Krise d. physikal. Weltbegriffs u. das Naturbild der Geschichte, Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissensch. u. Geistesgeschichte*, 6, 1.

ethical motives must work in unison, in order to counter the superiority of the three forces in State conduct; and in order to restore to the statesman that freedom and independence of action according to a purified and more truly wise *raison d'état*—such as Bismarck had possessed, and such as was easier to achieve in the old long-established monarchy, than in the present-day democracies, excited as they are by mass passions. The old type of monarchy, once it has collapsed, cannot be restored, or at least only to the accompaniment of unpredictable dangers for the future of the State. On the 9th November 1918, the spark of German *raison d'état* leapt over, of necessity, from the monarchy to the republic.[1] But now it is requisite for the properly-understood *raison d'état* of the democratic republic to accord the State authority, which rests on a plebiscite basis, as great a measure of independence and self-reliance as is compatible with this basis. The setting up of a strong plebiscite presidency offers more guarantees than parliamentarianism does, for a form of government in accordance with purified *raison d'état*. Parliamentarianism does indeed (as the journal *Vorwärts* expressed it at the time of the fall of Stresemann on 23rd November 1923) force the parties 'through the governmental mill' and 'makes demagogic activities difficult for them at the next elections'; i.e. it imbues their leaders temporarily, so long as they are governing, with *raison d'état*, but it does not last, and the breath of *raison d'état* which they have inhaled soon vanishes only too quickly on account of anxiety about the electorate.

Moreover it is necessary (also from the point of view of properly understood *raison d'état*) to recognize consciously the bounds of *raison d'état* and of State egoism. It is only by restricting itself, purifying itself and suppressing the natural element in itself, that *raison d'état* can achieve its best and most permanent effect. It is a good thing for it, if limitations are already set on it by the objective power-relationships of the world. An insufficiency of power-resources is (as we have seen) just as dangerous for the communal life of States as a superfluity of power-resources; especially if the latter accumulates in one place, and there is insufficient counterpoise, or none at all, capable of restoring the situation of a balance of power, which simultaneously holds the

[1] It was to this commanding authority of German *raison d'état* that Hindenburg yielded with great determination when he submitted to the rule of the people's deputies. Events during and after the Revolution were capable altogether of serving as a school in which to study *raison d'état*. The effect was tragicomic, when Kurt Eisner crept into the shell of the Bavarian idea of the State—a shell which, for the time being, was empty. Together with Prussia, Bavaria is the only individual State in Germany in which to a certain extent there is still alive the volcanic fire of a particular *raison d'état*. It was also very instructive to see afterwards how the same socialist party-members began to think in terms of Prussian *raison d'état* when they became Prussian ministers, and in terms of the *raison d'état* of the *Reich* when they became *Reich* ministers.

forces in a healthy tension and within healthy bounds. In its own interest, a powerful State ought to be desirous that there should be powerful States in its vicinity, so that each will be kept within bounds by the others, and yet each at the same time will be forced to maintain itself as powerful. On the whole it is also true of power, that moderation is best in all things.

And especially is it true of the case, where the responsible executive statesman believes that, for the sake of saving his Fatherland, he is obliged to have recourse to the weapons of Machiavelli. In the over-cultivated and unclear relationships of modern civilization, such a decision is even more two-edged than it formerly was. The invasion of Belgium harmed us more than it helped us. The unrestricted State-egoism, on which France has been acting up to now, threatens to make the catastrophe which has overtaken the West into an irreparable one. It is only within the family-like community of States that the individual State itself can prosper in the long run; and so its own power politics must be based on the recognition that even enemy States possess an essential right to life, and that true properly-understood interests bind the States together as well as separating them. That European sense of community which provided the underlying assumption for Ranke's assessment of the European power-conflicts, and which was the fine beneficial after-effect of the mediaeval idea of a *Corpus Christianum*, must be recovered once again. There is a need (as Troeltsch expressed it in his address of 1922) 'for a return to the mode of thinking and feeling about life in terms of universal history'. Whether a genuine League of Nations will ever become a reality may be doubted, if one strikes a balance between the natural forces and rational forces in historical life. It demands from the individual members certain sacrifices in sovereignty, which would only be supportable if all the members are imbued with a like sense of comradeship and an equally purified *raison d'état*. But what guarantee is there for this, i.e. who is to supervise it? If the task is taken on by the most powerful State, then the League immediately falls into the danger of becoming a mere vehicle for the power and interests of that State. But in the terrible dilemma in which the world is placed today, there is no alternative (if one is not to sacrifice oneself to a boundless Machiavellism) but to strive honourably for a genuine League of Nations, and at least make the attempt to save the world by this means. It may also perhaps occur that the era of free national conflicts (of 'international anarchy', as the pacifist describes it) may be brought to an end not by a genuine League of Nations, but by the world-hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon powers, in whose hands the strongest physical powers of the globe are already concentrated.[1] Such

[1] Cf. my essay *Weltgeschichtliche Parallelen unserer Lage* in *Nach der Revolution*, 1919.

a *pax anglo-saxonica* would not be by any means ideal, but it would always be more endurable for the individual life of the nations than the scourge of the French continental hegemony is.

But (and this is the final question to be posed) would not the extinguishing of the power-conflicts also extinguish at the same time the inner vitality and plastic strength of the States, human heroism and powers of self-sacrifice? Would the States then not sink to the level of burnt-out volcanoes or (as it has been quite well expressed by Spengler) of Fellaheen States? Are not mind and nature so inseparably connected, that all culture requires a certain nutritive basis of barbarism, and everything rational a certain element of irrationality? Is the complete rationalization of national and State life altogether a blessing? These ideas, which already appeared in Hegel, then played a role in Treitschke's assessment of war, and have subsequently been put forward in a more or less crude or subtle form by all the supporters of the idea of pure power right down to Spengler, are not such as can be historically refuted out of hand. One of the most acute foreign thinkers alive today, whose State philosophy has been nourished simultaneously by the spirit of Machiavelli and Hegel—namely, Benedetto Croce—said after the War: 'For what other reason, then, is a war ever undertaken, than in order to lead a fuller, better, more valuable and more powerful life? We all of us—both victors and vanquished—are certainly leading a spiritually higher life than we did before the War.' [1] We, the vanquished, can in fact discern (though with an inner sense of upheaval) the truth in this remark. But we also see more clearly than the victor does (who is now standing on the happier and sunner side of life) the terrible antinomy between the ideals of rational morality and the actual processes and causal connections of history. The fact that the water has risen higher round our necks than around his, perhaps enables us to see even more clearly the danger of the special historical moment at which we are standing: namely, the danger that the evils of war and power politics are threatening to choke the blessings they are capable of producing. Whatever can be said in their favour does not destroy the ideal of the League of Nations; for it is part of the very essence of reason that it should strive to exert its influence over nature and should set up such an ideal for itself. The burning needs of the time strengthen it in this, and make new and violent demands for those very limitations of *raison d'état* which have been fought over in vain for so many centuries. Even if this demand should only be partly capable of fulfilment—the mere approach to an unattainable ideal may be accounted a gain. The naturalistic forces of historical life will be sufficient to ensure that we shall not achieve peace on earth so quickly as all that;

[1] *Randbemerkungen eines Philosophen zum Weltkriege*, translated into German by J. Schlosser, 1921, p. 289.

and there is no need to strengthen them further with any doctrine which glorifies war and power-conflicts, thereby forcing statesmen all the more to pursue a course of Machiavellism. That obscure causal connection between mind and nature in State life (a connection which we have constantly emphasized) ought always to be acknowledged without being glorified. One ought to accept it as a given fate, but at the same time one ought to take up the struggle with that fate; all historical action and all the ideas that guide us are two-edged in just the same way. The modern mind perhaps sees and feels more sharply and painfully than earlier periods did, all the discontinuities, contradictions and insoluble problems of life, because it has lost the comforting belief in the unequivocal and absolute character of human ideals, on account of the relativizing consequences of historicism and on account of the experiences of modern history which have tended to induce scepticism. But the belief that there does exist an Absolute, capable of being recovered, is both a theoretical and a practical need; for, without such beliefs, pure contemplation would dissolve into a mere amusement with events, and practical conduct would be irretrievably exposed to all the naturalistic forces of historical life. But, within the horizon dominated by modern Man, there are only two points at which the Absolute manifests itself unveiled to his gaze: in the pure moral law on the one hand, and in the supreme achievements of art on the other. He can certainly also discern its effects in his world in all kinds of other ways, but he cannot unravel it from the veil of the temporal and transitory, in which it is wrapped. In history we do not see God, but only sense His presence in the clouds that surround Him. But there are only too many things in which God and the devil are entwined together. One of the most important of these, as Boccalini was the first to see, is *raison d'état*. Its character, since it re-entered human consciousness at the beginning of modern history, has always been puzzling, peremptory and seductive. Contemplation can never become tired of gazing into its sphinx-like countenance, and yet can never quite succeed in fathoming it. But it can only appeal to the executive statesman that he should always carry State and God together in his heart, if he is not to let himself be overpowered by the daemon (which he is still not quite capable of shaking off completely).

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